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Isaiah 53:11

MONTE CARLO

MONTE CARLO

A NOVEL

BY

MARGARET DE VERE STACPOOLE

NEW YORK
DODD, MEAD AND COMPANY
1914

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MONTE CARLO

It was the supreme moment of her life; all the struggles of the last two years, the cheap Bohemianism, her husband's buffets in the struggle for life as an artist, all the evil fairies and evil things which she had conquered by a successful novel just published and paying in England, lay before her in the place and its people. Then she turned her back on them, and followed by her husband, passed down the stairs to the door leading to the court-yard, and through the court-yard to the street where the cab was waiting. The Rue Lord Byron was bleak with fog, and as they turned into the smothered blaze of the Avenue des Champs-Elysées Julia nestled closer to her husband as if to impart to him some of the triumph and warmth of her soul.

Not that he needed it. Jack Revell was always triumphant and warm; in the midst of the chilliest day or the blackest disaster his temperature was normal—that is, above normal, for he was a genius, drawing his vitality less from food and drink than from those great sources of force that lie like lakes of generous wine in the country of Inspiration. Julia was practical. Grey-eyed, dove-like, the daughter

of a Dean, she had left the Deanery and the dovecote to follow Jack.

She was of the type of woman who follows Jack.

The wild feather in her wing had never been suspected till the day she married Jack clandestinely at a registrar's office and followed him to Paris and the delights of the Pension Bollivard. Their first home.

Her name was tabooed at the Deanery, and her epitaph in the Close was "Shocking," and she was considered dead till she suddenly terribly revived some three months ago and the daily papers were placarded with notices like this:

"Third edition exhausted, fourth edition nearly exhausted, fifth edition in the press.

"THE APPLE
BY
JULIA REVELL."

The book created much sensation; why, goodness knows! It was clever, and it dealt fearlessly with certain phases of Bohemian life in Paris; yet many books have these qualities

without obtaining much success. It was doubtless the title that made the sales, for there is nothing that whets the appetite of a garbage-grubbing public so much as a title suggestive of nastiness.

Yet what is there nasty about an apple? Nothing. But when people began to ask one another with a smile, "Have you read 'The Apple'?" one might have fancied oneself at Covent Garden when standing at Mudie's counter.

"Have you got 'The Apple'?" "Isn't 'The Apple' in?" "Dear me, dear me, why don't you get more of them?" and so forth, and so on, till, in the face of an eclipsed popularity the authoress of three days and a night began to feel for her laurels and question her titles.

Julia knew nothing of all this; she only read the press notices and noticed with a thrill and chill of delight the jumping of the book from a first to a second edition.

She heard the hand of Freedom fumbling at her cage door; a letter from her publisher indicated that the book was selling in thousands, not hundreds, and she could have written ask-

ing for an advance on royalties, but she did not. She waited three months, not wishing to appear pressed for money, and three days ago she had received her first cheque.

It was for five hundred pounds; a poor enough sum considering the success of the book, but not so bad considering the fact that it was a first book, and that the terms of her contract—ten per cent. on all royalties—were as much as she could expect under the circumstances.

Instantly on receipt of the cheque she had decided on Monte Carlo.

"I want to see the sun," said she, "and the gambling-tables and gentlefolk and wealth. Besides, I may pick up ideas for a new book. We needn't delay bothering about clothes. I have that black ninon; that will do for evening wear, and that blue serge coat and skirt, and I can buy a couple more blouses; that'll be enough to start on. We're not going into fashionable society, we can't afford it yet. We'll go to a quiet hotel; if we can't find a quiet hotel we'll move on to some quiet place— Mentone, or Bordighera—but Monte Carlo first."

Jack grumbled. He did not want to leave Paris and his work. He had just made plans for starting a studio of his own; but he gave in, squeezed the paint out of his brushes, packed them, and came.

Now they were in the Rue St. Honoré, and now they were treading the mean streets near the Gare du Lyon.

The great station was filled with fog—that white Paris fog which seems to come from the Seine by way of the Morgue; the place was filled with passengers and luggage; passengers for suburban trains, passengers for India and the East, Algiers and the South, Monte Carlo and the Côte d'Azure. They had bought their tickets at Cook's, and a Cook's man piloted them to the great express, sombre and magnificent, drawn up and waiting for a flight that would not cease till it touched tomorrow's sunset on the far-off Italian coast.

Scarcely had they reached the crowd surrounding the carriages than Jack Revell was seized and kissed on both cheeks by a stout man wearing a muffler.

It was Bachellry of the Théâtre Italien. He

and his company were also bound for Monte Carlo and the Casino, where they were to give four performances of *Musette*. He was a friend of Jack's, though Julia had only seen him once before, and in a moment she was introduced to the lot. To Madame de Corcieux, the principal star, looking very much like a plain old woman in her travelling get-up; to Marie Miton (otherwise known as Fatou Gaye), looking like nothing on earth but an actress; to Bompard, and Bazin, and Jappardy —the whole company, in fact, who, having shaken hands, completely forgot her as though the act had rendered her extinct.

The fuss, the cries, the acclamations, the laughter and scolding of a French theatrical touring company on wing, must be heard to be believed. Jackdaws taking their nests—a reminiscence of the Deanery garden—was the idea that filled the dazed mind of Julia as she took her seat in a compartment which was also, it seemed, to hold her husband, Bachellry and Mademoiselle Miton.

Jappardy and the rest were in the next compartment; she could hear them talking and

laughing as they stowed themselves away, rushing out now into the corridor to say good-bye to friends on the platform, hauling and struggling at the heavy corridor windows to get at more friends who had suddenly turned up to wish them adieu.

"They're a jolly lot, aren't they?" said Jack lighting a cigarette.

"Delightful," replied Julia dryly. "Who is the young woman?"

"She? Why, she's Marie Miton; you've seen her acting in *La Maison Perdue*—they call her Fatou Gaye."

"Acting—I've forgotten—what was her part?"

"The Chambermaid."

"Oh, *she*—Fatou Gaye—why do they call her Fatou Gaye?"

"From a girl in that book of Loti's—what's its name?—oh, 'The Romance of a Spahi.'"

"Haven't read it," said Julia. "I say, do you know that French actresses, even the best, aren't received in society?"

"Bother society," said Jack.

"I have—but society, after all, is society, and I wish—"

"What?"

"Nothing. I don't want to be a snob, but I wish we could find some other compartment."

"Train's full," replied he. "We're lucky, as it is, to have only four people in this. Besides, in the Rapide the most awful people are shoved on one. Last time I went south, years ago, I had four bagmen—Germans—and they snored."

"Bagmen aren't bad," replied Julia dreamily. She was thinking of Fatou Gaye, who, at that moment entering, stepped on her toes.

The train had started.

Fatou Gaye smiled, apologised, and seated herself, whilst Bachellry produced a cigar, which he lit, after asking permission, and a bundle of papers and magazines from his bag.

He looked over his magazines and papers, grunting the while, and Julia, through half-closed eyelids, looked at Fatou Gaye.

The most interesting study to woman is woman. Fatou had a sable cloak that must have cost five thousand francs at least; she

smelt of opoponax, and she wore a Paris pearl as big as a gum-boil on the ring finger of her left hand; she also wore some real diamonds. She had taken off her gloves, else Julia could not have seen these adornments, or the fact that Fatou's hands, though cared-for and manicured, were not the hands of a person of birth. They were hard, capable-looking hands; the thumbs were very large, and the nails were very large and dome-shaped. She was glancing through a French illustrated paper, which Bachellry had handed her, and Julia watched her whilst she read and formulated in her own mind the axiom, that to arrive at a true estimate of a person's mental and social condition the best way is to watch them whilst they are reading; she also noticed that Fatou Gaye's nostrils were rouged.

CHAPTER II

THE LAND OF COLOUR

"La Roche!"

The train slowed down and stopped. It is the first stop from Paris, and outside in the black and freezing night Julia heard the engine say "A-fizzz," the clank of the hammer of the man who taps the wheels, a porter's voice, a person coughing on the platform.

Fatou Gaye had disposed herself for sleep, Bachellry was snoring, Jack seemed asleep. They started, and she closed her eyes; but she could not sleep.

She was only twenty-two years of age, yet her two years of Bohemian life in Paris counted for twenty. Not till now did she see fully the horror of it, the sordidness of it, the beauty by contrast of the Grundified but clean social state which she had flouted when following Jack.

Jack was a gentleman, their marriage was legal, though clandestine, yet Julia Revell was

no longer Julia Ingatestone, the loadstar of curates, the Dean's daughter, the pretty Miss Ingatestone. It was not only that she had changed her name, but she had changed her condition. She knew quite well that if she were to "go back" she might go back to the place she came from, but not to the social condition. She had "run off with a painter and was living with terrible people in Paris."

"Mrs. Jack Revell—frightful, my dear."

"The poor dear Dean has never recovered—and she was really a charming girl."

She heard it all by intuition and the ear of instinct. It was not that she had stepped outside the pale of society; nowadays a woman can kick her heels far higher than Julia's before she does that. But she had put herself outside the pale of the correct social circle that held her people, her traditions, and her youth. She had out-clanned herself, rather than outclassed herself, and it was her punishment that she had a past, she was a woman with a past, a clean, wholesome bread-and-butter past, which kept obtruding itself always.

"The Apple" and all its frankness was written in a moment of revolt; it was her own story—a story like nothing so much as a problem novel of the Sarah Grand and "Iota" period turned inside-out—with a good past following the heroine instead of a bad. It did not matter in the least that the Church devoured her book, and that curates slept with it under their pillows; she knew quite well that no woman can get back into the social circle she had left through Mudie's, even with a life of St. Jerome in her hand, to say nothing of an apple; and all these thoughts kept sleep from her now; and all these thoughts had been brought upon her, not only by the first hour of her release from the Pension Nix, but by the presence of Fatou Gaye.

Fatou Gaye, like a horrible sermon in sables, had an eloquence all her own and far outstripping any sermon of Dean Ingatestone's.

Julia had thought to leave Bohemianism behind her, and here was the high priestess of it before her, travelling with her, clinging to her with the scent of opoponax and the acquies-

cence of Jack. It was the acceptance of the creature's society by Jack that made the whole situation and the sermon.

"Ah, well," thought Julia, "it is only for the journey; let me once get out of the train and then—"

She dozed off.

She was awakened by their stoppage at Dijon, and had a vision of an empty station with the gas lamps half on, and a sensation of stuffage. There is no other word. The travelling French invented the condition; the window and the door of their compartment had been closed by Bachellry whilst she had been asleep.

She opened the window a few inches and dozed off, awaking again to find it closed. This happened several times till she gave up the struggle, and, chloroformed by the fumes of her companions, slept till daybreak.

She awoke to find herself in a new world. They were away down by the Rhone, Northern Europe had been swept behind them by speed, the land of the cactus and the land of colour lay beneath the pale and patient dawn.

The few houses to be seen were flat-topped

and coloured, the mark of the sun was upon the land.

Jack had awakened; Fatou Gaye, terrific in the dawn, with tousled hair and parched lips, was yawning with the perfect abandon of her class. The powder was all gone from one cheek and the paint; Bachellry was making a cat's toilet with a forefinger and his handkerchief; the corridor outside was thronged with people passing up and down; Jappardy and Bompard, in travelling caps with ear-flaps down, looked in on them. Bompard was in his shirt-sleeves; he had been having a wash-up in the lavatory, and stood with a snatch of song on his lips, holding on to the door-jamb of the rocking train:

> O bel soleil de Provenco,
> Gai compère de Mistrau.

He rolled the words and rolled his eyes, whilst Madame de Corcieux, also on her way to the lavatory for a wash and brush-up, peeped over his shoulder. She was smoking a cigarette; they were all smoking now, Jack included.

He was talking and laughing, quite one of

them, but Julia in her corner was frigid. The broken night, the journey, the morning depression that comes to all of us, the whole position, made her irritable and out of sorts. She was angry with herself and angry with Jack. She felt isolated; that was the last straw. She had felt it often before in her Bohemian life. She had sacrificed the world she was born in to enter Bohemia, and the Bohemians did not get on with her; she did not mix with them; she was a white sheep in a flock of black, a drop of clear oil in a basin of dingy water. They were not nasty to her, but she was alien to them and outside their thoughts, as now.

When the breakfast-car was put on she refused Jack's invitation to go there for *déjeuner,* and off he went with the rest.

Then she repented. The thought of a cup of hot tea turned into a desire not to be resisted; she rose, left the compartment, and struggling from swaying corridor to swaying corridor reached the breakfast-car, opened the glass door and entered.

The place was crowded; the theatrical company had seized the seats nearest the door, and

there was just room for her, by squeezing, in a seat opposite to Jack.

He was seated by Marie Miton, chatting with her and laughing whilst she devoured hot rolls, butter and jam. Bachellry, with a napkin tied under his chin as if he were waiting to be shaved, was also devouring hot rolls, butter and jam. Bompard, Jappardy and Madame de Corcieux at the next table were doing likewise.

"Tea, please—nothing to eat," said Julia. "I have a headache—I'm not hungry—no, please, just tea."

Your suffering woman generally starves herself, whereas your suffering man takes a drink; but it is a poor sport to starve yourself unnoticed, and as Jack, in the highest spirit, saw nothing of her ill-humour, and was taking her plea of the headache as true coin, Julia, when the others had departed, took a roll.

"Why do French people insist on travelling with the windows tight closed?"

"I don't know," said Jack, rolling a cigarette; "ask me another."

"Pigs!"

"Why, what on earth is the matter with you, Julia?"

"Nothing. Pass me the sugar, please. Oh, Jack!"

"What?"

"I'm beginning to wish I was dead."

"Heavens on earth!" said Jack. "*Julie,* buck up! What's the matter? Have *I* done anything?"

Julia choked, drank a mouthful of tea and pushed her plate away.

"Tell me what it *is,*" said Jack.

"It's nothing, only—I can't stand these people."

"The Bachellry lot?"

"Oh, not them particularly—they're bad enough, goodness knows! but it's everyone. I want to get somewhere where everyone is clean and simple, some little place where one could have a little cottage and know people—quiet country people."

"Well, I'm afraid you won't find that in Monte Carlo."

"Jack!"

"Yes."

"I want you—I mean, I wish you'd come back to England. I know you love Paris, but it stifles me. Couldn't you paint just as well in England, in the country somewhere? Lots of painters live in the country—or at the seaside."

"Oh, my!" said Jack. "Do you want me to turn into an Academy painter of the old familiar pictures?

> Children with dogs, and aldermen with stomachs,
> Sunsets and frogs, and arctic scenes with hummocks,
> Pathos *sans* tear, that still the gullet strictures,
> All, all, are here, the old familiar pictures."

Julia sniffed. "I know I wrote that and now you fling it in my face, and *don't* roll your eyes like that abominable Bompard and his *'O bel soleil de provenco'*—yes, I do, I feel I could embrace an alderman with a stomach. I want to be respectable."

"You have funny notions of being respectable."

"I want a little home."

"Well, my darling, you shall have one."

"A little quiet English place with a church and a vicar and a Dorcas society."

"You shall have them."

"I love poor people."

"Of course you do. Don't you love me?"

"I mean poor, humble, clean people in cottages. Newquay, or is it Newlyn? would be lovely."

"Oh, *don't!*" cried Jack.

"Why?"

"I was there once; I was nearly posed to death by the fishermen. Every fisherman fancies himself a potential phantom for the walls of the Academy, every fisherwoman, every fisher-child, every fisher-dog. The very boats and nets have the taint."

"Well, there are lots of inland places."

"Lots."

"So you'll come?"

"Bless you, yes," said Jack, with that easy facility for acquiescence which was only equalled by his facility for forgetfulness. "I'll come anywhere you like."

Her bad humour had entirely vanished; this new plan opened a new horizon. Like a child with a new toy, she did not go for the moment beyond the pleasure of contemplation and pos-

session. There was lots of time to smash it when the place and the vicar and the Dorcas society had bored her sufficiently; but she did not even consider this, and restored in humour, she returned to her compartment where the Parisians were now playing cards, pausing in the game only when Marseilles was reached.

* * * * *

Jack was that perfectly superfluous thing—a handsome man. As long as a man is virile and clean it really doesn't matter what his looks are; as a matter of fact, he is much better plain, especially when married; for a married woman attached to a handsome husband is in the position of a person possessed of a valuable dog—proud of it, proud to be seen with it—yet always troubled by the fear of dog thieves.

Fortunately few husband-owners are afflicted in this way, and in Julia's case the affliction only came in spasms when she was out of sorts or run down physically, or disturbed in her mind as now.

They bought oranges at Marseilles, and Fatou Gaye had squeezed a pip between her

finger and thumb and sent it flying in the face of Jack. He retorted in kind, and the battle continued with the merriment of bean-feasters and the laughter of fools. She slapped him on the hand with her cards; he had joined in the game. And Julia, before reaching Toulon, became intimate with the meaning of that vile expression, "the glad eye."

All this meant little enough; Fatou had a glad eye for everything with a coat and trousers on; she would have given it to a scarecrow in a turnip field to keep her eye in. And Julia, guessing this by instinct, would not have cared, had she not fancied that once or twice she saw Jack returning the article.

In the luncheon-car champagne was the order of the day, and under its influence Fatou got foolish and joked the waiter, talked aloud, got angry and talked louder, grew calm and smiled fatuously. The glad eye grew watery and glistening. She peeled a banana just as an ape peels it, stripping the skin down, and ate it with an air of remoteness and her elbows on the table; and through it all Julia sat burning for her sex and Jack, who didn't seem to

notice anything, warmed as he was by champagne and the ravishing picture of Fatou now blowing thin streams of cigarette smoke through her painted nostrils.

Julia returned to her compartment alone.

CHAPTER III

MONTE CARLO

But now, just as life carries swiftly fools and wise men, the virtuous and vicious, the painted, the tainted, and the pure to the great terminus of each generation—so the Rapide was bearing its crowd to their destination. Nice, burning in the afternoon sun, Beaulieu, Villefranche, the blue sea, castellated Monaco, passed Julia's eyes in succession. La Condamine:

Monte Carlo!

Julia stepped from the train into a blaze of sunshine. She felt as though the great warm golden god of day had taken her in his arms and kissed her on the cheek. Palm-trees were waving their fronds in the wind; the crowd was nothing, the journey a bad dream over and done with; this was realization in full measure of all her visions of the south.

She stood waiting for Jack. She saw him rushing about seeing to the luggage, she saw

the express steaming off, bound for Ventimiglia. The Bachellry party had vanished like cigarette smoke; they had, in the confusion, forgotten to say good-bye to her. Then Jack came up.

"I've got an hotel," said he, as though he had picked one up on the platform. "Come on; the luggage is being put on the carriage."

"What's the hotel?" asked Julia.

"The 'Côte d'Azure.' Bachellry gave me the tip. It's only ten francs a day and he says it's clean."

"Well," said Julia, as the carriage started, "thank goodness *that's* over!"

"What?"

"The journey. Where are the Bachellry people staying?"

"The 'Côte d'Azure.'"

"Stop the carriage," said Julia.

"Why, what on earth is the matter now?" cried Jack in dismay.

"I'm not going to their hotel."

"Then where on earth are we to go?"

"I don't know."

"But see here, Julia—this place is simply ruinous, and it's simply full of thieves. The

'Côte d'Azure' mayn't be first-class, but it's respectable *bourgeois*. Bachellry warned me against cheap hotels here; besides, we can change to-morrow if you don't like it."

Julia wavered. Her prudent soul took fright at the idea of big hotels with big hotel bills yards long and filled with ruinous items; small hotels in which they might be robbed and murdered in the night and exported, packed in trunks, only to be discovered in quarters for the edification of newspaper readers; hotels where cardsharpers might fleece Jack. She knew enough of French people to be assured that the Bachellry's hotel might be, perhaps, not high-class, but that certainly it would be safe.

"Very well, then," said she. "Go there, but only for to-night; it seems like Fate."

"Which?"

"The way everything seems to cling to us."

"How d'ye mean?"

"Oh, everything. I wish we hadn't come here, but we can move on to Mentone, or somewhere quiet and cheap, to-morrow, can't we, if we don't like the place?"

"I'm game for anything you like," said Jack. "I didn't want to come, but now we're here let's make the best of it."

"Yes, let's" replied Julia.

They had not stopped the carriage, which had taken its leisurely way up-hill towards the terminus of the Funicular railway, near which, in the Rue de la Tour, the "Côte d'Azure" was situated.

"It doesn't look bad," said Julia, as they drew up; "it's clean—on the outside."

"Well, let's hope it's clean on the inside," replied he, as the hotel porter came out to take the baggage.

"Yes, let's," replied Julia, as she entered by the swinging glass doors followed by her husband.

It was—speckless, and the proprietress, in her little glass office, a stout French hotel-woman, with the well-upholstered appearance of her class, gave Julia confidence.

The double-bedded room on the second floor overlooking the Rue de la Tour was also speckless, airy and full of light.

"Dinner's at half-past seven," said Julia,

reading the card marked "*Avis*" nailed to the door, " 'and guests are earnestly asked to be punctual, else the full-course dinner can't be served to them.' We've lots of time to dress." She went to the window and looked out. "How quiet it is!"

"Why shouldn't it be?"

"Oh, I don't know; the very name Monte Carlo suggests noise and glitter and crush."

"You remind me of that woman in the play, who went to Monte Carlo and thought the firing of the pigeon shooters was the sound of people committing suicide. You'll find crush and glitter enough before you've done with the place, I expect." He was in his shirt-sleeves, unpacking and smoking a cigarette, and now he was holding up his dress-coat to the light, examining it critically. It was five years old, and the seams were beginning to show the signs of age, but it was the work of a good London tailor and would pass in the gas-light.

He flung it on the bed.

"Jack," said Julia, turning from the window and taking her seat on the couch.

"Yes?"

"I wish you'd promise me to avoid that creature as much as possible."

"What creature?"

"That abomination—Fatou—what do you call her?"

Jack laughed.

"Why, the way you talk one might think I was running after her."

"I might fancy that she was running after you, only that I know the type and sub-type to which the creature belongs and the species."

"Woman."

"There is no such thing as 'woman,'" said Julia, putting up her feet on the couch to rest for a moment before dressing. "Creatures that differ from one another as much as kangaroos from crocodiles have no right to inclusion in a common family."

"You're complimentary to your sex," said Jack.

"She'd run after you fast enough if you were rich," went on Julia. "As it is, she likes to have you hanging on to her, because you are a good-looking man. My dear Jack, you know me well enough to know that I am incapable of

ever developing into that most awful specimen of humanity, the jealous wife, and I know you well enough to give you *carte blanche* to do what you please. I ask you to avoid this person just as I asked you not to wear that awful purple necktie the other day. Just as I would ask you, if you were not the pink of cleanliness, to be clean for my sake if not for your own; to be seen with that woman is equivalent to being seen with your face unwashed and grubby nails."

"But I'm not seen with her."

"Well, I only spoke to warn you of my sentiments in the matter. I have got a fit of respectability and I have got it badly. Come on, there's the first gong and I want you to help me fasten my frock."

The *salle-à-manger* was large and clean and bare, and filled mostly with Germans. The Bachellry party were dining at a table remote from the one allotted to Julia and her husband; they seemed to be having a good time, and they were certainly having champagne, and the waiters danced attendance on them in a way in-

dicative of the fact that they were the prize guests of the "Côte d'Azure."

"We're nobodies here," said Julia; "it's a sort of distinction—turned inside out."

"How do you mean—nobodies?" asked Jack.

"I'm thinking of that lot over there."

"Which lot?"

"The theatre people. Look at the head waiter; he hangs behind Bachellry's chair the whole time. There goes another bottle of champagne." Then to the waiter with the wine-card viciously:

"Apollinaris water, please."

CHAPTER IV

CARSLAKE

Monte Carlo is only an extension of Paris by way of Enghien, an entension of London, St. Petersburg, Berlin and New York by way of Paris—that is to say, an extension of their worst and most brilliant parts. Vice really magnificently done: that is Monte Carlo.

There is something almost pleasant in the honesty of this place, and after the first blush something almost horrible.

After coffee, which they took at the Café de Paris, they entered the Casino, received their permits and passed to the rooms.

It was the first time that Julia had ever seen gambling on a big scale; and the sight of the first vast room, the great tables, and the solemn crowds impressed her with an eerie sensation hard to define or explain in origin.

She felt that all these people were more or less on a bad business, engaged in what is recognized by society as a vice, and it was the com-

mercial coldness and businesslike atmosphere of the place that gave her a little thrill.

Then each table in turn drew her towards it and held her fascinated.

"*Messieurs, faites vos jeux,*" the whirl of the ball, the snarl of the "*Rien ne va plus,*" the voice of Fate crying: "*Vingt-quatre, noir, pair et passe,*" the clink of silver and gold and the rustle of notes changing hands—all these fascinated her ears. The faces and the dress of the women held her eyes.

Jack explained to her the simple beauty of roulette.

"You see those numbers in the middle of the table, they run up to thirty-six. Well, if you were to put, say, a louis on one of those and it turned up, you'd receive thirty-five louis from the bank."

"Thirty-five."

"Yes, it's clear enough, you have thirty-five chances against you, and so you get thirty-five times your stake. Then, you see the figures are arranged in three columns; well, you can back any of those columns, and if a number turns up in the column you back, you get twice

your money, for the chances are two to one against you. Then you can back red or black, or odd or even, or *manque* or *passe;* that's pretty much like playing pitch and toss, for you only get the amount of your stake."

"Where did you learn all that, for you've never played roulette, have you?"

"I picked it up in that little book I bought—'Monte Carlo Intime.'"

"Let's have a try."

"You'll only lose your money."

"A five-franc piece won't ruin us."

He gave her a five-franc piece.

"What shall I put it on?" said Julia.

"Please yourself. If you put it on a number you may win a hundred and seventy-five francs, but most likely you'll lose. Put in on a colour; you'll have more chance."

Julia put her five francs on black, and black promptly lost.

"Ugh!" said she. "What a swindle! My beautiful five francs!"

"Gone where the good niggers go. I'll have a try."

He put five francs on red, and red won.

"There you are," said he, giving her back her money. "It's jolly, isn't it? Just like fishing!"

He put another five francs on red, and red won.

He did this twice more with the same result.

Then he turned away, jingling the silver in his pocket

"I knew it," said he, "and black is going to turn up this time." It did, and though he had not staked anything, his eyes sparkled with pleasure.

"How did you know?"

"I don't know. I seemed to get in the vein of it, I felt I could *make* it turn up."

"Try again," said Julia.

He did, and he lost.

"The feeling has gone off me; one must keep on playing to keep it up."

They passed into the *Trente et Quarante* room, where gold is the only play.

The crowd here is much more select, and you are much more likely to be robbed of your stakes or your winnings by some enterprising spirit than at the humbler tables.

"Look," said Julia. "Isn't that Mr. Carslake?"

"So it is," said Jack.

Carslake had been playing, but he had risen and was standing close to the *Chef de Partie*, watching the game.

He was a strong-looking man, with a hard-bitten face and an air of distinction. They had met him in Paris at a students' ball. Julia had danced with him and talked to him a good deal, and found him interesting.

He was an artist, just as he was a gambler, theatre-goer, collector of books—to while away the time. (At least, that was the impression he had given Julia.) One of those men who have everything, who do everything, and who do nothing. He might have been thirty, he might have been forty. It would be very difficult to say. But he had never been young—or had he? Had something happened in his life to cut short youth and harden his face like that? Julia wondered.

Then, as if feeling their gaze on him, he turned, caught Julia's eye and recognized her and lit up.

She could see he was pleased, and the next moment he was beside them, shaking hands

"Been here long?" asked he.

"Only came to-day," replied Jack. "Have you?"

"Oh, I'm not staying here, I'm staying up at La Turbie. I've been there a week. You can get up by the Funicular in twenty minutes or so, and I drop down here occasionally to see life."

"You'll see lots of it here," said Jack. "When did I see you last? Oh, yes, it was at the Qua'tz Arts ball. Doing much in the painting way?"

"No," replied Carslake. "I haven't touched a brush since I don't know when. Mrs. Revell, do you find this place amusing?"

"Do you mean the rooms?"

"Yes."

"No," said Julia consideratively; "but I find them interesting. Don't you?"

"Quite; that's why I came here, for I haven't any gambling tendencies I almost wish I had. Shall we go into the next room? It's more cheerful. The *Trente et Quarante* as compared

to the roulette, always reminds me of a medical ward in a hospital as compared to a surgical, less cheerful, for the people seem more diseased—or, at least, have less chance of recovery."

"Let's go into the surgical ward," said Julia.

Wandering from table to table they lost Jack and sat down on one of the fauteuils to wait for his reappearance.

"Do you know," said Carslake, "if all these people were to turn up here in their national dress the Casino would be like nothing so much as the Qua'tz Arts fancy dress ball without the fun and the music. I've been counting Russians, Poles, Spaniards, Norwegians, Greeks, two Turks, a nigger, three Japanese—"

"I was a Jap at the Qua'tz Arts Ball," said Julia.

"I remember, and you had your kimono folded wrong, right over left—did you ever get back your fan?"

"Never. It only cost a franc, so I didn't worry any more about it, though a franc in those days was—a franc."

"Those days—have you come in for a fortune?"

"No, I've written a book."

"I know you have."

"You know I have!"

"Yes."

"And you never complimented me."

"No. I'm awfully sorry—I compliment you."

"Have you read it?"

"Yes. Brentano sends me all the new books."

"Do you like it?"

"Do I like it? It interested me because it did not seem the book you would have written. It was very clever."

"So it surprised you as coming from me—thanks."

"No, I was quite prepared to find it clever—but the tone—"

"Ah, now we are coming to the tone—and what was wrong with the tone, pray—?"

"Too modern," said Carslake.

"You are beautifully vague."

"Not a bit. I'm only old-fashioned. The

modern woman's book appears to me as the thing she daren't say in public but which she dares say in print, and it's not the fact of her saying it, but her wanting to say it, that makes the trouble."

"I haven't said anything that I'm ashamed of."

"Heavens, no; your book is a miracle compared to the others, but in my humble opinion you are working on their level when you ought to be working on the heights."

"What heights?"

"The heights where the air is clear and clean, where love is love, and faith is faith, and sex is sex—all seen at their true value, and not as seen by the squalid incompetents who place sex first, love second, and faith nowhere."

"Heavens!" said Julia.

"You see, I'm old-fashioned, and I'm a man of action, not a literary man, so I suppose I don't count as a critic, but the way you people treat marriage relationship in your books alarms me. Not from what you say so much, but from what you do not say and what you condone. And society keeps pace with you. If I was married

to a woman I cared for and another man took her away from me, I'd follow and kill them both just as I'd kill a brace of rats—but nowadays, look round you, when does a man ever kill another man for dishonouring him?"

"In America they do."

"Yes, there are some men left in America—but in England, oh dear no; they sue for damages."

"And your code of morality would condone murder?"

"Certainly not. If I find a man assaulting my wife and I kill him—that is not murder but justice. The man who assaults my wife by making eyes at her, by laying plans to meet her, and by hypnotizing her into loving him is, compared to the other, just as a sneak thief is to a burglar. A worse criminal because a meaner."

"It seems to me we are getting away from the point."

"Not a bit. The novel and the play of to-day is a low-down affair because the sexual sneak thief is the main character. You can't get away from it. Adultery is the text of the

modern writer and the mental food of the modern reader, and it is really the only thing that seems to interest the modern woman—at least the writing woman."

"You forget dress," said Julia.

"She forgets it herself when on her darling subject 'undraped she goes forth amongst you.' "

"I think you are outrageously wrong."

"How?"

"You overstate things."

"Possibly, because I am angry with you for working on a level with these people when you have in yourself power to rise to higher things."

"It's funny," said Julia, "that you should be lecturing me like this in a gambling-room."

"I lecture! Never! I am a man of the world; I don't believe I have any religion. Just an idler and a critic who doesn't publish his criticisms for money. Your work interests me, for I think you are capable of clutching and handling the essentials of great drama and I don't like to see you working in the school of the petty Pornographists."

"What is there in 'The Apple' that makes you think I am capable of clutching and handling the essentials of great drama?"

"Nothing."

Julia turned away at this "squash" and bit her lip.

"There is nothing in 'The Apple' but cleverness."

"Then where does your knowledge of my capacity arise from?"

"Yourself."

"But you have only met me once."

"Oh," said Carslake, laughing. "It's the 'once' that tells you all about a person. When you meet a person for the second and third and fourth time your ideas about them lose their edge, acquaintanceship blunts the critical spirit—ah! there is your husband."

"I've been watching a man winning like anything," said Jack as he came up to them; "he must have collared three or four thousand pounds I should think; fistfuls of banknotes."

"Take care," said Carslake, laughing. "It's awfully bad luck to see another person winning

heavily, for it makes you want to go and do the same."

Jack sat beside them.

"It does; as a matter of fact," said he, "you feel all the time that you want to get the better of the tables. I wonder what a man feels like who breaks the bank."

"No one has ever broken the bank; you may suspend play at a table whilst they send for more money—that's all. Well, if you have had enough of the rooms, shall we go out and interview the Café de Paris? the air here isn't the best."

"It is stuffy," said Julia, as they rose to go. "Why don't they ventilate the place better?"

"Well, I suppose they are French, for one thing, and for another I've heard it said that the management rely upon bad air to help them in their business; people get hypnotised by the tables and lose control of themselves quicker when the air is bad. But that's all nonsense; I mean it's nonsense to say that the management conspire to poison people with bad air so as to get their money. They are perfectly honest; in fact, I should think that, as a busi-

ness establishment, this is the most generous and honestly-conducted in the world. Why should it not be? It is a machine so constructed that it must win. It has no need of trickery."

Outside, in front of the Café de Paris, they sat for awhile listening to the band and talking. The night was mild and beautifully clear and a great placid moon had risen over the Alps.

On the front you would have seen the moonlit coast stretching from the black blur of Cap Martin to the lights of Bordighera, but here there was nothing to be seen but the people, the lights of the cafés, and the moonlight of the façade of the Casino.

Jack and Carslake were having Manhattan cocktails, but Julia contented herself with coffee. She scarcely spoke, watching the crowd and leaving the conversation to the others.

Carslake disturbed her It is always disturbing to find that an unguessed person has been watching you and criticising your work, especially when the criticism is unfavourable.

His superior standpoint, the way he talked

down from the heights was enough to raise the very hair on the head of Resentment. Anyone else doing so would have been labelled "Prig," crumpled up by her mind and cast away to oblivion. But Carslake was not a prig. And—

"Why don't I hate him?" was the question she was asking herself, a question to which her inner consciousness could make no reply.

The people we dislike yet whom we ought to like, and the people we like yet whom we ought to dislike, are a strange company; everyone has them amidst that troop of following ghosts called Friends and Acquaintances. Beware of them, for it is very often from amidst these Borderland people that the strongest influences come to affect our lives.

They sat talking for half an hour or so and then they walked to the Funicular station where Carslake said good-bye.

"I expect we'll see more of you," said Jack; "drop down to luncheon some day. What's your address? The 'Hôtel de France'? Ours is the 'Côte d'Azure.' So long."

"Rum chap," said he, as they turned towards the Rue de la Tour.

"What's the matter with him?"

"I don't know; he's always floating about the world, and he doesn't seem to have any friends or relations. Lots of money, too. Always alone. Why doesn't he get married?"

"I don't know," replied Julia. "Jack—he told me I was working on a low level and 'The Apple' wasn't better than it ought to be—took its character away."

Jack snorted.

"Like his cheek. Makes me *mad* these fellows who can't do anything themselves criticising other people's work. Tell him to write a book himself."

"Oh, he didn't say anything against the writing, he praised what he called the 'cleverness' of it; but he insinuated that its morals weren't above reproach. He didn't say it in a nasty manner, and—I daresay he's right. He wasn't hitting at it so much as the whole tone of modern books—novels, you know."

"I know, it's all the same. Just like painting. There are always fellows going about the studios flinging up their hands at modern work, and they never produce anything them-

selves. You tell Carslake to sit down and write a book and get a cheque for five hundred for it, and then come and talk to you."

Julia laughed.

"I'm afraid he wouldn't understand that rule of measurement. Jack, you dear old thing, you aren't a moralist."

"No, thank God!" said Jack. "I've quite enough to do looking after my own morals without bothering about other people's. 'Live and let live' is my motto."

"That's not his. He said if he was married to a woman he cared for and if another man ran off with his wife he'd kill them both."

"Bosh!" said Jack. "He was highfalutin. If a woman's not good enough to stick to her husband she's not good enough to kill."

"What would you do if I ran off with anyone, Jack?"

"I'd spank you."

Eleven is not a very late hour, yet, after a long railway journey and a night in the train it seems late enough for sleep.

The Revells thought so as they lay awake.

There was a German card-party going on in

the next bedroom, accompanied by the popping of champagne corks. Then, French people came laughing and singing down the corridor. Then there was a quarrel between a Frenchman and his wife, growing so acute and shrill that Julia clung to her husband and, judging from the sounds outside, the manageress of the hotel had to intervene.

"Never again," murmured Julia. "Never again will I come to a cheap and clean hotel in a place like this—oh, *why* didn't we go to Cannes or somewhere respectable?"

"I don't know," said Jack. "Shall I go out and talk to the bounders?"

"Go out! Heavens, no! Barricade the door, more likely. Now they've stopped."

But the Germans hadn't.

CHAPTER V

MRS. FREKE

To awake in good health, in a clean, bright room with the southern sunlight pouring through the blinds, is a joy to be marked with the major joys of life.

Julia almost forgot the disturbances of the night before, and downstairs in the speckless coffee-room she could scarcely believe that the fresh-coloured Germans and the respectable-looking French were the people of the Bear Garden of last night. Somewhere amidst them was the man who had been abusing his wife and the wife who had been abusing her husband. The rest of the noise makers were doubtless there undiscoverable, but for all the speciousness of the place seen by daylight she had determined to move.

"Where'll you go?" said Jack as they sat at breakfast.

"To the biggest hotel and the best. The

Riviera Palace, I think; I liked the look of it yesterday."

"All right; will you go there and make arrangements or shall I?"

"I will, if you don't want to be bothered. I have some letters to write; then I'll give them notice here that we leave to-day. Then I'll go to the Riviera Palace, then—where'll we meet?"

"Meet me at the door of the Casino at half-past twelve and we'll go and have luncheon somewhere. I'm going to potter about and see the sights. I may go over to Monaco to have a look at the Musée Océanographique. Anyhow I'll be there at half-past twelve."

"You're such an untrustworthy person for an appointment; anyhow, if we don't meet I'll come back here for luncheon and then go on to the other hotel."

"All right," said he. "But I like your untrustworthiness. Who kept me waiting an hour only the other day at the Metro station?"

"I did," replied Julia. "And Jack—"

"Well?"

"Do keep clear of the Bachellry crowd."

Then Julia went off to the drawing-room to

write her letters, only to find the writing-table occupied by a fat Frenchwoman with a bust. When the latter had finished her scribbling, Julia pounced on the table only to find the supply of writing-paper exhausted. She went off to the office to obtain some, and returned to find the table in possession of a fat German with a beard, who had brought his own writing-paper, and seemed in permanent possession. She went upstairs, remembering a stylographic pen in her bag, and found the servants turning the room upside down.

"No matter," thought she. "I can write to-morrow and the Riviera Palace will be a better heading for the note-paper."

She went to the office, gave notice that they were leaving that day, and, having engaged rooms at the Riviera Palace, found herself free.

Julia belonged to the fortunate band of woman who can go about alone without fear of insult. She was young and by no means plain, but to the male mind she was unapproachable. What precisely it is that gives a woman this *cachet* goodness only knows, but so it is; and the fact remains, though the reason is undis-

coverable. She went through the town glancing at the shop windows, held sometimes fascinated by their wares. The jewellers' shops of Monte Carlo would hold an angel at gaze, and Julia, in front of Marx's, was debating in her mind the rival charms of a pendant set with peridots and a pendant almost vulgar with sapphires when a voice at her side said:

"Miss Ingatestone!"

She turned and found herself face to face with Mrs. Freke.

If the Deanery with the Dean inside it, the Close, the cathedral, and the streets of Closeminster had suddenly taken the place of vanished Monte Carlo, Julia might have been more surprised; but she could not have been more taken aback by the image of materialised respectability.

The Frekes owned Holm Hall, three miles from Closeminster; they were worth seven thousand a year; they were allied with several noble families, and the detestable snobbery that lives in a close worshipped them.

The Frekes—there were only two of them—tolerated the Close people at a distance, gave

big house-parties when dukes and lords and honourables came down for the shooting and the hunting; opened Holm Hall gardens once a year for a garden-party that let in everyone not in trade, and then closed up and remained aloof.

They were great travellers. Mrs. Freke, a woman of fifty, childless, thin, and with a wit and mind of her own, had taken a liking to Julia some years ago and had forgotten her. She did not know that she was married, for the gossip of Closeminster had no interest for Holm Hall; besides, she had been travelling a good deal during the last few years.

Coming upon the girl she had noticed and liked, in the foreign environment of Monte Carlo, was quite a pleasant surprise to her. Face, name and personality—all were joined instantly in her quick mind, and pleasurably, for she was bored this morning and a clear English face was a tonic.

"Oh, Mrs. Freke!" said Julia.

Her eyes lit up in surprise and pleasure; to be suddenly and kindly greeted by the great one after all the snubbing and spurning of the Close

and the Deanery was like manna from Heaven to her hungry soul.

"And what are you doing here?" said Mrs. Freke. "Dear me! why, it must be over two years since we last met. Where was it? Ah, yes, at our garden-party. And how is the dear Dean? Is he with you?"

"No," said Julia. "I am married."

"Married! Ah, that accounts for your being at Monte Carlo. Well, my dear, I congratulate you. Closeminster must be a very dull place for young people. George and I never drive in there but we feel depressed; cathedral towns always have that effect on me. And how is your father?"

"He is very well, I think; we don't correspond much; he quarrelled with me on account of my marriage. My husband was—not very well off when we married."

"A love match!" said Mrs. Freke.

"Yes, a love match; we ran away together and got married."

Mrs. Freke did not seem in the least shocked.

Her rather faded eyes lit up. Julia took courage.

"It was so absurd of father. Jack was poor, but he is just as good as us. But you know how strait-laced people are who live under the shelter of a cathedral. My name is Revell now."

"Is your husband any relation of the Featherstone Revells?" asked Mrs. Freke, casting up a pair of tortoiseshell eye-glasses to examine an over-dressed girl who was passing—somewhat as a naturalist raises a magnifying glass to glance at a beetle.

"Yes," said Julia; "that is, a connection."

She had never heard of the Featherstone Revells before, and she was not a liar, but for the life of her she could not help clutching at this straw of respectability.

"A very good family, too," said Mrs. Freke. 'Well, my dear, cheer up; fathers always come round. Have you any children?"

"No."

"That's a pity, for grandfathers come round quicker than fathers. Are you busy, or would you care to take a little walk and sit in the Casino grounds for a while?"

Would she care! Poor Julia! If at that moment the Angel Gabriel had offered her a

wing to conduct her to Heaven she would have turned from him to this plain old lady, who had so much—oh! so much—in her power.

Snob she never was, but she was eminently human.

Could she only enlist Mrs. Freke on her side?

Mrs. Freke, of Holm Hall. *The* Mrs. Freke!

They passed along till they came to the open space before the Casino, which they crossed, and entered the gardens.

If it had only been the main street of Closeminster! Here Mrs. Freke was wasted, absolutely wasted. It was as if she had found a well of magic essence in the desert; a fountain, one drop of which, if carried to her native town, would have converted dourness and stone walls into a welcome of grinning faces and waving flags, and she had no bottle to catch the magic water in—at least, she could think of none for the moment.

They sat down beneath a palm-tree. If you had told Julia in the Pension Nix that in a few days she would be sitting with Mrs. Freke of Holm Hall under a palm-tree, she would not

have believed you. She scarcely believed it now.

"I'm looking for George," said Mrs. Freke, glancing about her through the tortoiseshell lorgnette. "We generally meet here in the morning; then we go and have luncheon together somewhere—that is to say, if we don't lunch at the hotel. We are staying at the Hôtel de Paris."

"How convenient!" said Julia. "We are staying at the Riviera Palace; it's further off, but the view is very good."

"Very good, and so is the cooking; but George prefers the Hôtel de Paris. He likes to be near the Casino; he meets every one there. He does not play, but it amuses him to walk round the tables. Have you seen the tables yet?"

"Yes," laughed Julia, "and I lost five francs. We went there last night after dinner and met some friends—a Mr. Carslake and some other people."

"I never go at night," said Mrs. Freke. "The sight of all those Frenchwomen in diamonds gives me a shiver; they are bad enough in the theatre. You will enjoy the theatre here.

I went twice this week to see Rejane. Dear me! Look at that girl!"

A girl was passing in a skirt that permitted her to hobble, and was the last word of drapery in indecency.

"Terrible!" said Mrs. Freke.

"Terrible!" echoed Julia, wondering what her companion would say if she were to see Fatou Gaye.

"She looks as if she had stepped out of a bad French novel," said Mrs. Freke, as she followed the hobbling one with her gaze.

"Exactly," said Julia, who had been debating with herself as to whether she would tell of her connection with literature. Mrs. Freke had evidently never heard of "The Apple" or the fact of her authorship.

She determined to tell.

Within the last few minutes a plan had formed itself in her mind. If she could make a real friend of this woman, if she could get her to ask her down to Holm Hall for a day—even for half a day, her position would be re-made in Closeminster.

That dull, sacrosanct lot might watch her

ascending like a star in the firmament of London and only sneer. She knew them so well: "I see Mrs. Jack Revell was at the Duchess of So-and-So's garden-party; it's in the *Morning Post.*" "Yes, my dear; these writing people creep in everywhere nowadays. No wonder! in the times we are living in with its Lloyd Georges and Keir Hardies," etc.

But the news: "Mrs. Jack Revell is staying with the Frekes, she and her husband"; there would be no sneering at that.

But in order to bring the event about, it would be absolutely necessary for her to act openly in so far as her book was concerned.

"Do you know," said she, with a little laugh, "I have written a novel."

"Written a novel? How nice! And what is it about?"

"It's called 'The Apple.'"

"'The Apple!' *You* have written 'The Apple.' Why, my dear, how clever of you. Everyone was talking of it in town, and Lady Laughton made me read it. Such a good aim, too, for I cannot imagine a more useful work

than showing up a flighty character like Jane Smithers. But where did you get your characters from? They are all so well drawn and so —so—well, one might fancy it had been written by someone brought up from childhood in that terrible Bohemian society. You never saw people like that in the Close. And yet the childhood of Jane Smithers, that awful father and that awful painter she married—the man whose socks wanted darning. Why, they might have been drawn from life. Astonishing!"

"Oh," said Julia lightly, "once the imagination sets to work one never knows where it leads one. I suppose I drew Bohemians so well simply because I have a horror of them."

"It is the case of Charlotte Brontë," said the good lady. "There we have a girl living all her life in a parsonage and then producing 'Jane Eyre.' Dear me! dear me! I remember the time when 'Jane Eyre' was considered a shocking book, quite unfit for a young person to read. And now look at the books that are given to us. Well, your book, at all events, is clean, though it deals with terrible people, like dear Du Maurier's 'Trilby.' "

Julia gave a sigh of contentment. *That* ordeal was over, and she had profited by it.

"I am glad you like it," she said, and those were six of the truest words she ever spoke.

"Of course, you are writing another," said Mrs. Freke.

"Oh, yes; that is to say, I am going to start another."

"Ah, well, may I make a suggestion?"

"Indeed you may. I am only too glad to receive suggestions from capable critics."

"Well, then, in your next book give us something about England. Your life at Closeminster must have given you great insight into the ecclesiastical side of English life."

"It has, indeed," said Julia dryly.

"And with your power of description of character, what a charming and delightful book you might make of it."

Julia smiled inwardly.

"Dear Mrs. Humphry Ward has shown what may be done in that direction, though to my mind she writes about the pulpit too much as though she were writing *in* the pulpit."

"I will remember what you say," said the

sycophant. "A novel such as you suggest might be done very well about a place like Closeminster. How fortunate it was that I met you this morning, for an idea like that may prove invaluable to me, and"—bright thought—"it may help me to make friends again with father. You see, he is old-fashioned and does not understand writing books. I almost believe he thinks I have disgraced myself by taking up literature—at least, novel writing—yet the best people nowadays do it."

"I will speak to him when I see him," said Mrs. Freke.

"Oh, dear Mrs. Freke!" said Julia, glowing all over. "If you *only* would. He has such a deep respect for you and—and if, when you return to Holm Hall, you would let me run down and see you for an hour or two and bring my husband to show you"—she laughed—"then I might drive on with him to father and be reconciled."

She had shot her bolt and the word "reconciled" was the barb that made it stick. Who is there not proud of the title of Reconciler?

"I shall be delighted," said Mrs. Freke.

"You and your husband can come down to me for a week-end and make your peace. I will drive you over to the Deanery. It is such a pity that a parent and his child should be divided by a misconception. I will lecture him on books. Besides, it is so absurd to keep up anger on account of a runaway match. Of course, one may be angry at first, but to keep it up is not only foolish, but, I think, wrong."

"I shall never forget what you say or your goodness," murmured Julia.

"Of course, your father belongs to the old school," went on the other; "and, I must say, I find something charming about people of the old school in this age of hurry and business. One only finds them in quiet places like Closeminster—back-waters, so to speak. Still, there is reason in everything. If you had run away with a man your inferior in birth, or one of those terrible Bohemian people, or with a tradesman, then of course it would be understandable. And as for writing novels—that's nonsense. As you say, the best people do it nowadays."

A confused statement, but none the less de-

lightful to Julia, who could have gone on her knees upon the gravelled path and kissed the glacé kid shod feet of her deliverer.

"Ah," said Mrs. Freke, glancing up before her companion could formulate her feelings and express them in words, "there is my husband."

Mr. Freke was coming towards them along the path. He was a mild, rather distinguished-looking old gentleman, in well-worn grey tweeds, brown boots, and wearing a Marienbad hat with a little tuft at the back of it.

He was smoking the butt of a cigar, and he had no personal adornment, save a rheumatic ring on his gouty right hand, and an inconspicuous gold and platinum watch-chain. Yet his coat, though well worn, was a creation of Stultz, and his boots, though thick soled, a product of Buhls.

Inconspicuous as a grey moth, he had yet the stamp of English wealth and birth—a perfect example of the English town and county gentleman over fifty; the person who looks at home anywhere, whether in the covert, the hunting-field, the drawing-room, or the House of Parliament.

The French, the German or the Austrian nobility cannot produce a thing like this; their *salon* man does not fit the field, he is too glossy; and the right-down country man does not fit the *salon*, he is too dull.

It takes a nation which has produced an Oliver Cromwell and a Charles to produce Frekes.

When he had been introduced, he glanced at his watch; it was half-past twelve. He proposed luncheon, including Julia in his invitation, and they all moved off in the direction of Ciro's, which is situated in the colonnade opposite the Casino.

To Julia it seemed that she was ascending from Heaven to Heaven, a dangerous experience for a mere mortal.

Ciro's was nearly full, but Mr. Freke had secured a table. Ciro's is perhaps *the* restaurant of the modern world; Sherry's of New York, the London Ritz, the Café Anglais of Paris, the best restaurants of Vienna, and of St. Petersburg, all give the *pas* to Ciro's.

You may see any live person there except perhaps the Czar, the King, and the Austrian Emperor.

Mrs. Freke was a good table companion, for she knew most of the people present, at least by repute; she was an old frequenter of Monte Carlo, and had tales about everyone, from M. Ciro and his lovely daughters to the Russian Grand Duke at the table opposite to them.

They had reached the stage of dessert before half of the other people had got half through their meal, for the Frekes were solid and simple people and Mrs. Freke was threatened with gout; and Julia, though she ate, had no appetite nor taste and would have devoured sawdust with just as much consciousness as the Blanquette de Veau which they serve so well at Ciro's.

They had nearly finished when Mrs. Freke looked up from the fruit which she was peeling on her plate. "Dear me," said she, "who are these extraordinary people?"

Julia glanced round and saw Bachellry, Fatou Gaye and Jack. They had just entered the restaurant and were making, piloted by a waiter, to a table close to the table of the Frekes.

CHAPTER VI

DISASTER

Jack had been disporting himself in the Casino, and coming out had met Bachellry and Co., who had just finished rehearsal for that evening's performance.

Bachellry had reserved a table at Ciro's for himself, Mademoiselle Miton, and Madame de Corcieux; but a furious quarrel at the rehearsal had split the party—that is, had divided Bachellry and Fatou Gaye from the rest—for a moment.

To-night, after the performance, they would all be good friends again, supping together and making merry; just now they were speechless. The Devil, jealous of Julia's happiness, had prompted Bachellry to ask Jack to take Madame de Corcieux's place, and Jack, glancing round and not seeing a sign of Julia, had accepted.

You may fancy his surprise when on entering Ciro's he saw Julia at a table with an elderly

lady and gentleman whom he had never seen before.

"I don't know," said the unhappy Julia. For one supreme moment she hung speechless. Was there the slightest chance that Jack might not see her, or, seeing her, have the genius to ignore her? Fatou Gaye was an open condemnation, worse even than the girl in the hobble skirt whom Mrs. Freke had labelled "dreadful." Bachellry wasn't much better, and Jack himself, handsome though he was, had against the background of Ciro's a distinctly Bohemian touch. He was wearing a rather exaggerated bow necktie, one of the abominations beloved of the Quarter. The Quarter had left its mark on him; to Julia's hyper-sensitized eyes that mark was blindingly evident; it seemed to her in that half-second that she had never seen her husband before as he really was. Only now, with the elegance of the fashionable world blazing on him like a lamp, and the Frekes to assist her gaze.

He recognised her, smiled, left the people he was with and came towards her.

It was absolutely unnecessary and it was not the thing to do.

"It is my husband," said Julia, the blood surging to her face. She introduced him. He was in very high spirits, he had tried his luck at the tables and had won a hundred francs.

"A hundred francs off five; well, I must get back to M. Bachellry. I'll meet you at the 'Côte d'Azure.' Have you moved your luggage yet?"

"No," said Julia. And off he went.

Old Mr. Freke was paying the bill with rather tight lips; he didn't like the look of the Bachellry people, they were against his British instincts; and Jack did not appeal to him; nor did the fact that the people round about had seen Jack leave the Bachellrys and come to his table. "Damned cheek!"

But Mrs. Freke showed nothing, only a touch of colour on the cheek bones.

She was quite vivacious, in fact, though she said not a word about Julia's husband; she was talking of the excellence of the fruit served at Ciro's and wondering whether the grapes were from Australia or the Cape.

Then they rose to go.

"And I hope we will meet some time again—please give my love to the dear Dean when you write. Good-bye."

Julia watched them leave. When they had vanished beyond the door she rose from her seat, which she had retaken for a moment, and without one glance at her husband left the place.

But on the colonnade she stood for a moment looking at the sunlit façade of the Casino.

"Well, that's done with," murmured she.

She did not feel angry for the moment. She felt numb and careless; had the contents of the Close and Deanery defiled before her with thumb to nose she would not have resented the insult. Then, as she passed along the colonnade towards the Crédit Lyonnais the numbness and exhaustion of mind passed slowly, giving place to a great anger.

An anger all the more terrible because as yet it had no object; it drew its life from everywhere, from Closeminster and Paris and Monte Carlo; from the laughter and chatter of the streets, from the sun that shone, and the very paving-stones she trod on.

The anger of the animal that finds itself in a

trap, or the woman who finds herself in a false position.

A false position of her own making, too. The Frekes had lifted her up to the heights, only to show her how far she could drop; to show her how far beneath them was the level which she had chosen for herself.

She was entirely the authoress of her own tragedy, and it was such a pitiful, ill-written half-and-half sort of tragedy. Had she committed social suicide in earnest she would, at least, as an artist, have drawn some satisfaction from the completeness of the thing, as it was she had only succeeded in making herself questionable.

Society she could always have amidst the only people who really count to the artist; the writers of books, the painters of pictures, the modellers of clay, the thinkers of the world, and the liberal-minded public; but it was her misfortune that Julia Ingatestone, the daughter of Dean Ingatestone, and Julia Revell, the authoress of "The Apple," were two distinct people. Like the illustrious Tartarin, she was compounded of a tame rabbit and a wild rabbit, and the wild

rabbit had lured the tame rabbit out to the thyme of the hills and the questionable society of the warren and to a craving for the hutch and lettuce leaves that amounted to a passion.

Leaving aside the desire for respectability, which was part and parcel of the nature which she had inherited from her father, the more powerful desire to put herself right in Closeminster held her in its grip. It was a pitiable desire enough, but the pitiable desires are always the most potent.

She was walking now uphill in the direction of the "Côte d'Azure," and it would be hard to say exactly where on her road she found herself face to face with Jack in phantom form, for the anger born from a hundred sources had given place to anger born from a single source—her husband.

There comes to nearly every married woman this moment when she is brought face to face with her husband and forced to examine him critically, form an unprejudiced opinion of him and act on the result. Some women have to condone one thing, some another; temper, intemperance or loose conduct, one or the other,

brings nearly every man to the bar of matrimonial justice at some time or other, and nearly every woman to the bench in the guise of Judge. As a rule the criminal is forgiven, and rightly, because, as a rule, the Judge is as big a sinner in thought if not in deed. If Julia had been trying Jack for drunkenness or any of the other crimes he would have been acquitted; a tangible misdemeanour is a thing you can hit at and rail at and—forgive. Jack's crime was, however, intangible; it was not so much a crime as a disease with which he had infected her, a consumption of the reputation, a leprosy attacking respectability, and, what made the matter worse, was the fact that she herself was as much to blame as Jack.

She knew the sort of man he was before she married him, and, hypnotised by passion, she had married him; when passionate love had passed, loyalty took its place, and, to use his own term, she "stuck to him like a brick," taking the life she was condemned to and building her hopes on the hope of his success in Art. Then her book came to her like a child to comfort her, and, lo and behold! this child of her

mind was the monitor Fate appointed to show her Jack as he was, and herself as she was, and their position relative to one another and the world.

She was thinking nothing of this. She was thinking in pictures.

She saw again the café she had just left and Bachellry entering with that swinging step of his, his necktie loose, his oily black hair, impossible hair for a gentleman, his fat, clean-shaved actor's face; Fatou Gaye in a hat like a beehive and a dress like a hopsack, hard-lipped and blooming with *bloom de Ninon,* Jack following —one of them, and looking it. Mrs. Freke's face at the words "My husband." Old Mr. Freke's face as he was paying the bill, her own awful position having to introduce a person who was standing to two people who were sitting and who did not want to be introduced—and to whom the whole thing was an outrage.

"Beast!" said Julia. "Beast! beast! beast! I asked him not to go with those wretches. I felt what was coming; even in the train I felt it, and he *would.* Beast! beast! beast!"

She was in front of the "Côte d'Azure" now

and she stopped, went in, found that the luggage had been removed to the Riviera Palace, and, having said good-bye to the manageress, followed the luggage.

CHAPTER VII

THE QUARREL

At six o'clock Julia was seated in her room at the new hotel when Jack entered.

He had guessed nothing of the disaster he had brought about. Having left Bachellry, he had returned to the tables, and again playing for small stakes, had been wonderfully lucky in increasing his hundred francs to five hundred.

"Hello, Julie!" said he.

Julia dropped the book she was reading into her lap and looked up at him. She did not say a word.

"I've made a pile of money," said Jack, flinging his hat on the couch. "If I'd only had the courage of my convictions I'd have made a fortune."

He went to the window and glanced out to see what sort of a view the new room had and turned again. "I began by putting ten francs on manque. Manque turned up six times running. If I had only doubled my stakes each

time I'd have made a pile; but I hadn't the courage of my convictions. Why, what's the matter with you, Julia?"

"When did you leave those people?"

"What people?"

"What people! Those cads you disgraced me by being seen with."

"Bachellry?"

"Don't mention his name."

"Disgraced you?"

"Yes, disgraced me. And that was not bad enough, you must not only recognise me, but come to our table."

"Your table! I'm awfully sorry, but—see here, I didn't know. I saw you with a couple of fusty-looking old people and I thought, maybe, you'd be bored and would like to join us, and then I saw you go out. You promised to meet me and never turned up."

"And you promised me to have no more to do with that lot."

"Did I?" said the easy acquiescer, scratching his head.

"Did you? You did! And then—then, at the most important moment of my life, you

turned up with them, branding me with your own brand."

"For goodness' sake, Julia, do talk sense! I brand you! With what brand, and how was it the most important moment of your life? It seemed to me you were having luncheon."

"Do you know the people with whom I was?"

"Not from Adam."

"Well, they were the Frekes."

"They looked it," said Jack. "The old woman stared at me as if she were stuffed."

"The Frekes of Holm Hall, the only people who could possibly help me to get back into the position I have lost."

"The position you have lost! How have you lost your position?"

"By marrying you."

"By marrying me?"

"Yes."

"Oh!"

"You may well say 'Oh!'" Julia was not quite clear herself as to the meaning of this retort, yet it had somehow the power of raising her companion's anger.

"I don't see what position you have lost; and

all I can say is, if only those two old images can raise you into it, it must have been a damned silly position."

"That's right, swear! You'll be breaking the furniture next."

"I didn't mean to swear, but you go on as if you were half cracked. Here I come back feeling jolly, and I find you flying at me as if I'd committed a murder. What have I done?"

"Nothing," said Julia, closing her lips on the word.

"You don't think—you're not imagining that I've any—that I care for that painted woman?"

Julia laughed in a cracked and discordant manner.

"It does not matter to me who you care for. What *does* matter to me is the fact that you don't care for my reputation."

"In what way?"

"Can't you *see* the object you made of yourself to-day, and of me before those people?"

"The Freaks?"

"Yes, the Frekes. They know every one I know; they fancied I was living amongst re-

spectable people. Mrs. Freke invited me to her house, and then—"

"I'm awfully sorry," said Jack.

He fancied he knew exactly the position, and he did, in part. He had an overmastering contempt for the conservative and strait-laced people from amidst whom his wife had sprung; they were antagonistic to every fibre of his being. Yet he was large-hearted and large-minded enough to recognise that her craving to stand well with them was natural, though, to him, scarcely understandable. He would have been horrified if he had guessed the terrible gulf that this thwarted craving had cut between him and her, its depth and its extent. It was not in his nature to understand this or even suspect it.

"I'm awfully sorry," said he. "Look here, Julia, it wasn't my fault; I didn't know you'd be there or I wouldn't have come, and I didn't know the sort of people you were with or I would not have come up to you. I know what you mean; Bachellry and that girl aren't the sort of people that those sort of people would cotton to. But, good heavens! I'm not mar-

ried to Bachellry. Anyone may meet a man like that as an acquaintance. He told me himself that the Grand Duke What's-his-name gave him a diamond pin. Do you know, there's a lot of people who would think it an honour to be seen with him. I know! I know your point of view and those people's, and I'm awfully sorry—"

"It's not only them, it's the whole position," said Julia hardly.

"I don't understand."

"You couldn't. You have become one of them; even in your dress it shows; it's like a disease. Even the necktie and collar you are wearing."

"Now that's nonsense," said Jack. "Can't a man be a gentleman and wear a collar that doesn't choke him?"

"Oh, you can't understand," said Julia, taking up her book.

"All right, then," said he in a huff, and off he went, shutting the door—almost banging it. He had left his hat behind him, so she knew that he was not going out.

In twenty minutes or so he came back, an-

nouncing that it was time to dress for dinner; his good humour had completely returned; cigarettes and a whisky-and-soda had helped it back. But Julia, unstimulated, had nothing to meet him with but a request for his help in fastening her frock.

Downstairs in the enormous dining-room Julia wished that they had stayed at the "Côte d'Azure." She felt an outsider amidst all these well-dressed women; she felt that her black ninon and simple ornaments were a mark for all eyes

She was hypersensitive, for no one noticed her, or, if they did, only as a simply-dressed and pretty woman; but the feeling grew and spread even to the waiters. She fancied that they were inattentive; she thought, possibly, that the hotel people, knowing, doubtless, that they had come from the "Côte d'Azure," looked down on them.

"No, thank you," she said, when they had finished "I won't go out again; you can, if you like. And, Jack, I shan't stay here. I'm sick of Monte Carlo; I'll go to-morrow. Not another night will I sleep in this place."

"Where shall we go to?" asked Jack. He

was beginning to enjoy himself, especially at the tables; he had vague dreams of making a fortune at the tables, playing low to begin with, and then, when he had accumulated sufficient winnings, starting a real campaign; for the painter and fine artist in his composition had for companion an optimist and dreamer not above dreams of gold; there was also somewhere in the cells of his brain an instinct for gambling, the disembodied instinct of an old Revell, who in long past years had been a pillar of Crockford's. The instinct was already awake and rubbing its hands.

He did not want to leave Monte Carlo.

"I don't know," said Julia. "Somewhere quiet, very quiet, where I can write and not be bothered with people—a desert island for choice."

"Ah," said he, "I know."

"What?"

"Never mind; I'll think it out. Well, if you won't go out, I'll have a turn. Don't sit up for me."

"Don't make a noise when you come up, and if I'm asleep, don't wake me up. You know if

my first sleep is broken I lie awake the whole night."

"I won't," said he.

He came up to the room to get his hat, and then he went off, and Julia turned to her book. She read till half-past eleven, and then, as he had not returned, she went to bed.

She was not a woman to lie awake even when in trouble, and five minutes after retiring, she was sound asleep. And when Jack returned a little after twelve, with the dust of a long walk on his boots—gently snoring.

CHAPTER VIII

LA TURBIE

"I've found a place," said he next morning at breakfast.

"Where?"

"Not far off, a place as quiet as a church. Guess where?"

"I can't."

"La Turbie."

"Oh! Why, that's where Mr. Carslake is staying."

"Just so. I thought of it last night and took the Funicular up there. I saw him and had a smoke; then I walked back, for the last train had gone. And do you know what I have found also?"

"What?"

"A real old Robert Louis Stevenson sort of an hotel, half café, half hotel. It might have come out of 'An Island Voyage, or Travels with a Donkey.' You wait till you see it. I've taken rooms."

"And if I don't like them?"

"Well, we can move somewhere else. But you will."

"Perhaps," said Julia.

She went upstairs to pack, the packing always fell to her—and when she had finished and the luggage was strapped, she looked around to see that nothing was forgotten.

Then she came downstairs. Jack had paid the bill and a carriage was at the door; the luggage was put on it, and as Jack got in he gave the coachman the address.

"La Turbie—the Hôtel de France."

"The Hôtel de France," said Julia. "Why, that's the hotel Mr. Carslake is stopping at."

"Yes, I told you, didn't I? Do you mind?"

"Not a bit," said Julia indifferently. "He won't spoil the place—he's clean—ugh!"

They had turned into the street, and it was as if Monte Carlo had hit her in the face; the sight of the very houses was repugnant to her, the sight of the people. It seemed to her that the place had a smell of its own, an atmosphere of its own, an uncleanliness beneath all the glitter and varnish and brightness that nothing could

purify. It was the fit playground of the Bachellrys and Fatou Gayes of the world: the vulgar, the sordid, the heartless and the lustful.

But now the carriage, leaving the houses behind, was taking the uphill road to the heights, like a slowly closing door the trees and walls of the road shut out the city of pleasure, and like a slowly opening door the road brought Nature to them—the flashing of the sea, unbroken sky, coast visions, and the breath of the mountains.

La Turbie lies high above the city of pleasure, three thousand or four thousand miles above it, to the soul.

Augustus, Emperor of Rome, built himself a monument at La Turbie. The Roman legions camped there and marched along the great white road where the motor cars pass now from Nice to Mentone, Ventimiglia and San Remo. Everything of the Roman age is gone but the ruins of the old town and the Tower of Augustus, also in ruins.

The Tower of Augustus dominates the place; you can see it, dwarfed and broken as it is, from far-off Bordighera; great drums of stone from its encircling pillars lie about the town and

make convenient seats for the peasants and muleteers. Modern La Turbie is half built from the Tower of Augustus, yet Time and Man have been unable to destroy its significance. And the mighty ruin still stands, mocking the modern world with its hint of the splendour of the past.

The modern town is just a street, houses built on either side of the National Road, and, inconspicuous, on the right-hand side as you go towards Nice and almost opposite the entrance to the old town, lies the Hôtel de France.

Julia liked the place at first sight. There were tables and seats in front of the door; you entered and found yourself in a large restaurant, which occupied nearly the whole space of the ground-floor; there was a bar with a marvellous variety of bottles behind it and no barmaid; a large stove in the centre; wicker chairs; rather coarse, but absolutely white tablecloths, and a basket of crisp French bread. The place was so clean, so honest, so picturesque, and so homely, that Julia's heart was at once taken by it, and she almost felt grateful to Jack.

The landlord soon appeared, a little man in

slippers, with a rosy face, a humorous eye and a ready laugh.

"Would Madame come upstairs to see the rooms?"

The landlord's wife accompanied her.

The rooms faced the street, two rooms connected by a stone passage, and having use of the same broad balcony; they were airy and clean, marble floored, and the balcony had a chair and table, an absolutely ideal writing-place, for it was roofed against sun and rain.

"Charming," said Julia. "I'm delighted. Oh, if we'd only come here first instead of to that inferno down below!" Then to the landlady: "We will stay a week at least—a month perhaps; and who knows but we'll stay here for ever?"

Madame laughed. Then, the traps having been brought up, she closed the door and the Revells found themselves alone.

They went out on to the balcony and sat looking at the people in the street.

The high mountains all about here are studded with forts and fortifications, and the drum tap and the roll of commissariat wagons are

common sounds in La Turbie. The soldiers come down for provisions and news, and make the place cheery with their uniforms and their laughter. Great motor brakes, full of trippers, buzz through from Nice or stop for refreshment.

Sitting on the balcony of the Hôtel de France you can hear a motor lorry draw up and all America suddenly breaking loose in the bar down below; sometimes it is a German invasion, sometimes an English, but it passes, scarcely troubling the peace, and leaving La Turbie to the sun and the wind blowing the dust of the National Road.

"Look!" said Julia.

A motor-car labelled "Pathé" had drawn up some distance away. It was crammed with a cinematograph company off to risk their lives on some desperate picture drama amidst the hills. They had bought saucepan-lids at the tin shop that lies three doors away, and, as the car started, they began to sing, banging the saucepan-lids like cymbals to the words of the song.

"Lunatics!" said Julia; "but they are happy, and they aren't painted; they are the only

clean French theatrical people I have ever seen."

The quarrel with her husband the night before was patched over; you cannot live cheek by jowl with another person and keep up a live quarrel unless you are built on entirely different lines from the ordinary mortal. Julia had bridged over the chasm that had suddenly yawned between herself and Jack, but the bridge was of the thinnest, no traffic heavier than commonplaces was sure of safe transit, and even these sometimes put a hoof through.

"Theatrical people are pretty much the same all the world over," said Jack. "English and French are just the same."

"Are they? I don't know anything about them, and what's more, I don't want to. Ah, there's Mr. Carslake."

Carslake was coming along smoking a cigar on the opposite side of the way; as he crossed the road he looked up, saw Julia and bowed.

"You see we have come," said she, leaning over the balcony rail.

"How do you like the hotel?"

"Awfully."

"Glad."

"Been down to Monte?" asked Jack, leaning over and joining in the conversation.

"No; I've been to Eze—come down, both of you, and join me, I'm going to have a lemon-squash, it's quite the correct thing here to sit in front of your hotel on the pavement. Right."

They came down and joined him at a marble table.

It was the first time that Julia had seen him in the light of day. The man you meet in evening clothes is sometimes a surprisingly different person from the same man seen in morning attire. But Carslake was just the same; clothes did not alter him, and Julia noticed with a certain satisfaction that he belonged to the same type as old Mr. Freke. Inconspicuous, well-groomed, neat, in middle-aged, well-cut tweeds; they matched completely as far as form went; only—Carslake did not wear a rheumatic ring.

Jack told of his success at the tables the day before and Carslake smiled; he seemed to regard Jack and his doings from the amiable but higher standpoint of a man of the world who

sympathises with art but does not share the artistic temperament.

"Be on your guard," said he, "or the tables may suck you in. You know the maelstrom—and, by the way, a friend of mine who was yachting in the Lofoden region told me it's not all a fable; in bad weather, if you don't mind out, you get caught and dashed to pieces on the rocks—well the secret of the whirlpool is that at first it exercises only a slight attraction, then there comes a point where the attraction is overpowering."

"It's just the same with men and women," said Julia. She spoke almost without consciousness that she was speaking, addressing no one in particular.

"Just," said Carslake, looking at her. Her remark seemed to have switched him off for a second from the line of what he was saying.

Jack laughed, and lit a cigarette.

"You needn't fear that I will be sucked into the tables; you can't be if you put a limit to yourself. I only dabble at the thing for fun."

"Oh, I never thought you would," said Carslake. "Only human nature has a passion for

warning, it's only equalled by the passion for getting into mischief. Are you lunching here?"

"Well," replied Jack. "I'm thinking of running down to Monte. What are you doing, Julia?"

"I'm staying here."

Carslake looked at his watch.

"It's twenty to twelve. If you are going down to Monte Carlo I'll go with you; I haven't been down since the night before last."

"All right," said Jack. "You won't be lonely, Julia?"

"Not in the least," replied she. "I have lots to do." Then without saying good-bye to Carslake she went into the hotel.

Carslake glanced after her, the faintest perceptible smile passed across his lips and vanished.

CHAPTER IX

THE TABLES

They walked along to the Funicular station from where you can see Monaco far below like a toy city, Cap Martin like a dark green turtle crawling out to the blue sea, and the far-off Italian coast marked by the white houses of Bordighera.

"I can't make women out," said Jack, as they waited for the train.

"Who can?" replied the other.

"You know," went on Jack, "we came down here in the train with some people, friends of mine—Bachellry, the man who is playing at the theatre here, and his company. They aren't bad people in their way and yesterday I met them and went to Ciro's for lunch, and who should I find there but my wife, lunching with some fusty old English people—and, oh my! didn't I catch it!"

"From the fusty old English people?"

"No, from my wife."

"What had you done?"

"Nothing. She said I'd disgraced her by being seen with Bachellry."

"Don't know the gentleman."

"He's all right to look at, only you can tell, of course, he's theatrical. But, you see, Julia has been brought up awfully strictly, the very word 'theatre' would give her old father fits; and her marriage with me has set all her people against her. Painting is another thing that gives them fits. They're Church people."

"I know the sort," said Carslake.

"I thought Julia had got over all that humbug, but you can't alter a person's nature. She'd have been all right, of course, only for these rotten old people from her place—the Freaks; they have a big country house down near Closeminster and Julia reckoned on them squaring things up with her father—she's fought with her father over me."

Carslake smiled. This new light on Julia and her aspirations seemed to amuse and interest him. He questioned the ingenuous one without seeming to do so. Everything that throws a light on a woman's mentality is of interest to a

man like Carslake. When Jack had finished Carslake's powerful face fell into repose; he seemed to be weighing something in his mind. Then the train arrived and they took their seats.

Outside the Café Anglais Carslake proposed *déjeuner*.

"Did you tell your wife that it was I who suggested La Turbie to you?" asked he, as they lit their cigarettes after the meal.

"No. Why?"

"Because if she doesn't like it, she will visit the sins of the place on my head, so remain dumb, please. Well, shall we adjourn to the Casino?"

They passed out and just as they reached the street two ladies who were passing stopped and turned; one of them had recognised Carslake, and Jack waited whilst Carslake went up to her. He could not hear what was said, but two things struck him: the women were of a certain type, and the conversation, though animated, seemed scarcely friendly. The women were English, and the one to whom Carslake seemed addressing all his remarks had the stamp of refinement

upon her, indelible, yet blurred, by the usage of the world.

She had once been that complex thing called "a lady," one could have sworn to that fact; also to the fact that she was now that simple thing, a demi-mondaine.

Once, for a moment, she grew shrill as though disputing some point at issue.

Jack chuckled to himself. There is nothing your mediocre man enjoys so much as seeing your highly-respectable man in an equivocal position. He remembered what Julia had told him about Carslake and what he had said about "The Apple."

Then the latter himself came up.

"That's all the good one gets by being charitable," said he. "Help one of these unfortunate people once and they look on you as an enemy if you don't keep up the business."

He seemed irritable, a strange condition with him, and Jack did not force the subject. Nor did he care a fig about it, for they were ascending the Casino steps now and the spirit of the place had his mind in charge. By night the rooms wear a certain veil; lamplight, the spirit

of night and the glitter of diamonds, lend a specious appearance of festivity to the scene; but daylight, like a plain-dealing and prosaic friend, strips away shams, greed strips away false expression, and men and women appear pretty much as they are.

On entering the rooms for the first time Jack Revell had experienced no other sensation than that of curiosity; the taste for gambling was the last vicious taste that he would have suspected in himself, and he would have resented the epithet "gambler" just as he would have resented the appellation "drunkard." He would still; and yet no gambler ever, perhaps, entered the rooms with a more burning desire for play than he to-day.

He took his stand with Carslake at the table which is known to the *habitués* of the rooms as the suicides' table.

The ball had just spun and the bank was raking in its winnings.

"*Messieurs, faites vos jeux.*"

Carslake put his hand in his breast pocket and produced a note-case; he took a note for a hundred francs from it.

"I never play," said he with a laugh; "and I am only doing this to see how luck is with me, just as you hold a straw to see which way the wind blows."

He put the note on red.

The ball span and clicked into a socket.

"*Premier! rouge, impair, et manque,*" came the voice of the croupier.

"You have won," said Jack.

Carslake left his stake on the red and won again; a third time, and he won again.

"Fortune is with me," said he, putting the money in his pocket. "I'm going before she turns against me. What are you going to do?"

"Play," said the other.

He put a louis on *impair* and won.

"Well, good luck to you," said Carslake; but Jack did not hear him or notice his going—the game had him.

He backed *impair* again and won.

A lady who had been winning, raked her money together, and, rising, vacated her seat which he took.

He had never taken a seat at the tables before.

He had five louis in gold in his waistcoat pocket and in the side pocket of his coat he had a pocket-book which contained all the available money they possessed, some four hundred and fifty pounds. It was Julia's money, and to carry such a sum on one's person was not wisdom. But in France, where cheques are not and where all payments are made in coin or notes, people take risks that they would not take in England.

He had been staking single louis up to this, and winning.

He doubled his stakes and won again.

To increase the stakes when one is winning and to increase them when one is losing is a human instinct and one of the main promptings of the gambler.

The bank never increases its stakes beyond those set forth in the schedule, and perhaps some philosophical brain may discover from the restraint on the part of the bank the origin of its success and of the fact that the bank always wins—in the long run.

The bank is a machine without nerves, without passion, playing mechanically against hu-

man beings, and always winning. The chances are absolutely equal between the machine and the human beings, with the exception of the slight margin of profit given to the machine by zero. The Prince of Monaco, the Casino, the nine thousand attendants, the croupiers, the golf links and the management are not supported or built out of zero. Nor out of the fact that the bank's purse is longer than the purse of each individual player. No; but out of the fact that the bank never plays "wild," whereas the human being does; human weakness is perhaps the true secret of the enormous profits of the inhuman game at which a machine pits itself against a human being.

In five minutes Jack had lost every single gold coin in his possession and came up against the fact with a "stunt."

His lips in a second became dry as pumice-stone and he moistened them.

He had not lost much, as losing goes, but the bank had given him a blow, almost as painful as a physical blow in the face. He sat for a moment, telling himself inwardly that he had been a fool. If he had *only* not doubled his

stakes he would have had enough to tide him over the bad streak. There was nothing to be done but to take a lesson for the future and get back what he had lost. He put his hand into his pocket, produced his pocket-book, and changed a five-hundred-franc note.

Then with great caution he began to play again.

He was backing *manque* against *passe*. He won again and again, shifting sometimes to *passe*. And then, just as though he had never received a lesson, he was doubling again, and not only doubling, but quadrupling.

In less than an hour and twenty-five minutes two more bank-notes were changed, not from the love of play, but from black necessity.

It was not "play" now. His condition was that of the man who has fallen over a precipice, is clinging to some projection quarter way down; not vitally hurt, but with death already tickling the soles of his feet.

Now he would scramble up a few louis, then he would slither down. He could not stop. The imperative desire to regain his position held him at work; once, bravely risking fate,

he won fifty louis at a spin of the wheel. Ah! the turn had come at last; now was the moment to press the victory home. He had been backing *manque* against *passe;* this was the first time *manque* had turned up during the last five spins of the ball. He would hit hard now and escape from his position, scale the heights to safety with two or three violent efforts. He left his stake on the table and added twice the amount, still backing *manque.*

He stood to win a hundred and fifty louis or lose the like amount. If you had told him yesterday, or even this morning, that he would ever stake such a sum at the tables, he would have laughed you to scorn. "Impossible," he would have said. "I don't drink and I'm reckoned sane, and I would be either drunk or insane to do such a thing." Well, there he was doing it, and not only doing it, but urged to do it by a vital driving force, which was not the spirit of gambling, but the spirit of self-protection which urges a man to make superhuman efforts to escape from danger.

He *could* not go back to Julia and tell her that he had lost half her money; he *must* recover his

position. Since he was under this imperative necessity, it was far better to make short work of it—nay, it was imperative to make short work of it just as it is imperative for a man to leave a bath of over-hot water as quickly as possible.

Meanwhile the table was making itself up, and here let me advise the amateur gambler against Monte Carlo, and in favour of smaller casinos like San Remo or that at Bordighera. At Monte Carlo the tables are so large and the accounts to be settled so numerous, that a wearisome long time is wasted between the spins of the wheel. At the little tables of San Remo the game is much brisker; you receive your punishment or your reward much quicker, to say nothing of the fact that the atmosphere is cleaner.

"*Messieurs, faites vos jeux.*"

The croupier spun the ball and Jack Revell prayed to *manque* as he had never prayed to God.

"*Rien ne va plus.*"

The ball continued rolling for a few seconds,

hesitated, and fell into its fate-appointed socket with a click.

"*Trente, rouge, pair et passe,*" came the loud Belgian voice.

Jack had lost.

He continued playing, but only with single louis, and he had a horrible run of luck with these small stakes. Six times *manque* turned up, and all he made out of the run was six louis. It was this run of luck that brought him to his senses like a douche of cold water. He rose to his feet and crossed the room to the door of exit.

Outside in the great atrium he examined his resources. He had lost three hundred and twenty-five pounds, and all in the space of two hours or a little over. And the money was Julia's. He had spent her hard earnings on what? On buying two hours of the most acute mental suffering he had ever experienced. He understood now what people meant by the term "gambling hell." It was Hell. The old Anglo-Saxon word of four letters summed up everything, and the extraordinary thing was that he had fallen into this pit marked "Dan-

gerous" with his eyes open and against his own volition.

He had only meant to sit on the edge and pick a few golden flowers; the edge had not given way with him, he had deliberately descended to destruction.

Of the four hundred and fifty pounds with which he had entered the place he had only one hundred and twenty-five left.

He crossed over to the Café de Paris and ordered some whisky, which he drank, almost unconscious of what he was doing. Then he sat smoking cigarettes and listening to the chatter of the people round about which mixed with the music of the red-coated band.

One might have fancied him plunged pretty deeply in the gulf of despondency. Yet he was not. The disaster was great, yet it seemed a thing past and done with, leaving him numbed and incapable of much feeling, but not suffering acutely.

We never rise to the height of our disasters for more than a few minutes.

He sat for a long time, then he looked at his watch; it was five o'clock. He remembered

Julia up at La Turbie, and the remembrance brought him the first real pang since his dramatic awakening in the atrium of the Casino.

She had been such a brick, and had stuck to him so well through all the bad time. She had worked so hard at her book and she had trusted him with the money it had brought her.

Then, strangely enough, he remembered the Frekes. He had hit her there too. The Bachellrys came next; she had disliked them and he had forced them on her. He was unconsciously raking up all his misdeeds against her. They were not many, and they were not serious, yet magnified by the disaster they seemed bad enough; and, reviewing them, he wandered away through the Casino gardens till he reached the broad promenade which looks towards the sea over the pigeon-shooting ground.

The shooting was going on. He watched the man putting the pigeons in the traps, the flight of the birds one by one, and their death as they fell, mangled by the cads shooting in concealment below.

He found himself pitying the birds, and once, when a pigeon, escaping the guns, flew away

across the blue sea, he almost forget his own trouble in the pleasure of watching its escape.

But the trouble was there and growing, and, like a phantom capable of metamorphosis, it had changed in form and was creating new thoughts.

He was not thinking of Julia now, but of himself. He would work to pay her the money back; he would pot-boil, paint friezes for fat millionaires, do anything till the debt was paid off. Optimistic by nature, he did not feel the weight of the money loss so much as the disgrace of his own weakness. He could *never* go to Julia and confess; say to her: "I took your money to-day and played with it and lost the greater part of it." He reviewed these words considerately; they were the only words he could use, and they were impossible.

They were, to him, a confession of theft. His crime was really an abuse of confidence; he was on a par with the solicitor who speculates with his client's money and loses it, a thievery born of optimism rather than of rescality, a sneaky sort of hopeful vice hateful to Jack Revell's soul.

He would have much sooner confessed to a burglary. He was telling himself this when a voice suddenly whispered to him: "In not confessing what you have done you are a meaner creature than the creature who played with her money and lost it. It is not the hatred of your sin that makes confession impossible, but your fear of her scorn. Weakness made you commit the act and weakness prevents you from doing the only manly thing possible under the circumstances."

Conscience told him this, and she might just as well have held her tongue In nine cases out of ten she had much better hold her tongue, for in nine cases out of ten she only speaks after the sealing event, when the thing is done which can't be undone, and when talking is useless.

She only succeeded in giving the unfortunate Jack a little extra pain; she did not in the least alter his determination that confession was impossible.

He looked at his watch. It was now ten minutes to six, and mechanically he took his way from the Casino grounds to the town and uphill to the Funicular station.

Half an hour later he was on the heights of La Turbie and walking towards the Hôtel de France.

CHAPTER X

THE ADVENTURES OF JULIA

THAT morning, when Julia was left to herself, she went upstairs and began to unpack. Unpacking is one of those mechanical operations that assist thought and sometimes feed it.

Jack's evening suit recalled to her the Casino on their first night in Monte Carlo, Carslake, the "Côte d'Azure," the German card-party, and the quarrel between the Frenchman and his wife. There was nothing belonging to the unfortunate Jack that had not some tag of Bohemian remembrance clinging to it.

She came upon a pair of his socks; they wanted darning, and the remembrance of Mrs. Freke's words about the awful painter with the holes in his socks shot up in her brain.

She rolled them up and flung them into the bottom of the wardrobe.

Seven out of ten marriages are more or less unfortunate, and, at a conservative estimate, four out of ten are disasters. And let married

couples say what they will, the main cause in this unfortunate state of affairs is want of the power of affection.

Romantic love is the most beautiful device of nature and the most treacherous; it is the gilding which she can put on the commonest nature, and when the gilding wears off the nature shows. If it has little power of affection, no other quality can make a married life entirely happy, or save it in the majority of cases from being more or less unhappy.

And though Julia, I think, had enough of this sacred power and to spare, it had not been brought out in her married life.

Little likeable faults and weaknesses, ugliness, even, when it is not a degraded form of ugliness, disability when it is not brought on by vice—all these are potent in stirring that extraordinary and unselfish love which turns the heart of a woman into the heart of a good mother or a good wife.

Jack's faults were mainly the faults of the Bohemians whom she hated; he was too good-looking to be loved for his ugliness, and he had no particular disability, except perhaps the dis-

ability to turn his Art into money—and that, she was sure, was only temporary.

But she was not thinking of Jack as she sat on the bed just now; she was thinking of Carslake, and wondering why the thought of Carslake made things seem different somehow, and brighter.

She analysed, or attempted to analyse, this feeling; but directly she put Carslake into her crucible he turned into thin air. She could not tell in the least why the thought of him was welcome, or why his presence was desirable, or why his presence altered the Hôtel de France—gave it an extra touch of picturesqueness and welcome.

The same with La Turbie. She recognised that Carslake had put his stamp on La Turbie too. Yet when reflecting on Monaco there was no trace of him. Monaco had left a strong impression on her mind made up of itself—Jack, the Bachellrys and the Frekes. Carslake lent no tincture to the impression, yet he coloured La Turbie to the depths of its last dim alley; he lent colour to the mountains also, and the coast view. To everything that pleased her, in fact.

It seemed impossible to associate his image with disagreeable things.

"Am I in love with him, then?" asked she of herself, and the reply came promptly: "Not in the least."

She could measure her answer by her past experience of love.

Jack, for instance—his handsome face had haunted her from the very first moment of meeting him. She had met him when on a visit to London. It had been love at first sight with a vengeance; the craving for him was like the craving for water in a desert, and the object of her craving was, from the first, quite definite.

Carslake's face haunted her as little as his boots or his walking-stick; she had no craving for him. Why, then, had he such power to make a place almost part of himself? She dismissed the matter from her mind and went on with her work.

Then she took her writing materials out on the balcony.

As yet she had no very definite idea for her new book. A book, to have any worth or

vitality, must be born and not made, and a woman's book, unless worthless, must be born of a concrete and personal seed.

One might easily imagine vexation over the eclipse of a frock, the genesis of a woman's novel, pathetic, poignant and powerful; but it would be hard to imagine a general or abstract idea capable of the same fructification.

One might imagine Mrs. Freke in Julia's hands highly productive, and as she sat on the balcony of the Hôtel de France with blank paper, pens and ink before her, the image of Mrs. Freke was seated on a chair upon the paper, conversing volubly on the question as to whether Ciro got his grapes from the Cape or Australia.

But the image of Mrs. Freke was productive of nothing but a general loathing of Monte Carlo, Paris, and all the people she had met in those places. She felt that if she had to write of them she never would write again.

It was as well, perhaps, that in the moment of despondency *déjeuner* was announced. Julia, looking at her watch, found that it was half-past twelve; she left her writing materi-

als to look after themselves and came downstairs.

She was the only person taking the meal. The Hôtel de France apparently makes most of its money out of excursionists, who pause to refresh themselves and pass on. Julia, her husband and Carslake were the only guests staying in the house, and she was glad enough of the fact as she sat at her lonely meal.

After it was over she fetched her hat, and coming outside, sat down by one of the little marble tables. The landlord brought her coffee, and as she drank it she watched the street, the comers and goers, natives, tourists who had wandered up from Monte Carlo and occasional soldiers from the forts above.

She had finished her coffee and was wondering what she should do next, when a motor-car, coming from the direction of Monte Carlo, drew her attention. It was the Hodgkinsons' car, and it looked it. The Hodgkinsons have a villa at Bordighera, situated near the Hôtel Angst, and in a garden almost as wonderful, and the sight of the girls of the family in workmanlike tweeds or plain cotton frocks gives

one a gasp of relief amidst the satin hop sacks, preposterous hats, and high heels of the German, Italian and French *bourgeoisie* who crowd the place.

Two of the Hodgkinson girls were in the car, seated with their backs to the chauffeur, and opposite them were seated Mr. and Mrs. Freke. The car had slowed down and was coming along now at a snail's pace, as if undecided where to stop and set down its cargo of sightseers.

I think I have mentioned the fact that Mrs. Freke affected tortoiseshell lorgnettes. With these to her eyes she was examining the houses, the shops, the names over the shops with as much apparent interest as though La Turbie were some city of the moon and the car a flying machine just arrived. The solitary girl sitting before the Hôtel de France was far too conspicuous a figure to be missed by the tortoiseshell eye-glasses, which swept her into their view, held her for the thousandth part of a second and swept on.

"She has cut me," murmured Julia. "Cad!"

She watched the car cross the road and stop

before the entrance to the old town, and the occupants get out and vanish through the dingy opening. It is a murderous-looking place, the old town of La Turbie, but the robbery and assassination of the whole party would not at that moment have disturbed Julia particularly.

She waited and watched till they came out again, talking and laughing, got into the car and drove away.

Only for Jack and Bachellry and Fatou Gaye Mrs. Freke would have recognised her and most probably stopped the car. Julia did not know who the girls were, but she *did* know that they were clean English girls of a good type, the sort of people that her soul craved for; people who bathed regularly, used no cosmetics, played tennis, and were probably a little dull.

She left her seat and strolled along the road that leads to the high platform from which the Funicular train plunges down to Monte Carlo.

It was a perfect day, and a dome of unbroken blue stretched from far-off Italy to the far-off Estereles.

A world of absolute peace and beauty lay at her feet.

Far down, zigzagging amidst the olive trees, she could see the Funicular train ascending from the town below.

It stopped at the platform, and a number of people got out, and, amongst the others, Carslake. She was standing at the wall that overlooks the platform, and when he glanced up and saw her, she nodded to him and smiled.

She had been watching the train with indifference, in that hateful frame of mind during which the soul sees everything as through a green window, and bears a grudge against everything it sees; if the train had been filled with Mrs. Frekes she would not have watched the disgorgement of its passengers with more disfavour. The sight of Carslake brought her relief for a moment from the green devils, though why, she did not know in the least.

"I've been watching you nearly all the way from Monte Carlo," said Julia, as he joined her; "not you, but the train. Did you feel any antagonistic influence?"

"No—why?"

"I don't know, but it seems to me that everything I watch to-day must have a ban on it. I feel like Malvolio."

"You certainly don't look like it. What's the matter?"

"Everything."

"That, as a rule, means nothing—or indigestion."

"I've got indigestion with the world," said Julia. "What have you done with my husband?"

"I left him in the Casino. Let's sit down. There's a seat over there, and we can get a bit of breeze. What particular bit of the world has given you indigestion?"

"The bit you call society. Have you never felt the same?"

"No," said Carslake. "I've always refused to swallow it. And what particular bit of society is it that disagrees with you at the moment?"

"A bit I dislike and despise, and yet which —which—"

"Yes?"

"I don't know how to put it. You couldn't

understand unless you knew all, and you couldn't know all unless you knew my life from the very beginning. Even then you would not understand, for no man can understand a woman and the thousand and one trifles that make up a girl's life before she is married."

"Instruct me."

"You'd have to be born again in the form of a baby girl before you could understand—born in a Close, as I was, in the midst of propriety, with a father who was a father and a clergyman at the same time. Now I'll just tell you something so that you may see what a contrary thing human nature is. I never remember anything at home that was not humdrum and starchy. I never remember a single person in our set who was not unoriginal and *bourgeois* in mind; I do not recollect a male or female who was not a good deal of a snob. I was a little snob myself."

"A charming one, I'm sure," murmured Carslake, lighting a cigarette.

"Quite, in appearance," said Julia placidly, "but not in heart. Yet I had originality enough to despise the others without knowing

exactly what I despised. Jesus Christ was a carpenter, was he not?"

"I believe so," said Carslake, rather startled by this sudden turn.

"And a carpenter ranks below a shopkeeper, and a shopkeeper ranks below a professional man."

"So I have always believed."

"Well, the Close people who worshipped a carpenter and made a very fat living out of him, wiped their boots on the professional men of the town, looked on the tradesmen as people look on disgusting forms of beetles, and as for carpenters, did not consider them at all. I'm talking from the inside of the business and I know. In the social life of the Church of England, Christ is only a pawn in the social game of which the big pieces are archbishops, bishops, prebendaries and deans. Please don't think I'm jaundiced and one-eyed. I can see that the Church does splendid work, but the splendid work is not done by the people who take the fat and give others the lean, who pride themselves on their position in the church—sanctified souls."

"Go on," said Carslake, laughing. "The Church from the inside is much more amusing than the Church from the outside."

"I'm not saying all this to prove anything, I'm just telling it to you to show the contrariness of human nature. You'd think I'd be glad to get rid of the lot and never see them again; you'd think I'd be quite happy to cut myself adrift from them; well, I'm not. I've taken up a different way of life, and those people whom I despise, despise me. I've made myself a black sheep—at least, a grey sheep—amongst these people"

"But why on earth do you worry?"

"Because I was born amongst them, and I have some of their blood in my veins."

"You are a snob?"

"Yes, I'm a snob. Funny, isn't it? I can't help it. It's like being torn with green eyes. I'm like the King of the Black Isles, half made of flesh and half made of stone. I'm half a snob and half the other thing, and I've been cut to-day by a woman who is queen bee of the Closeminster hive. She was quite friendly to me yesterday—and then—and then—"

Julia was on the point of tears. Self-revelation with a woman nearly always ends up with tears. Carslake, somewhat astonished by her frankness, said nothing. He knew that silence on his part was the best styptic for the lachrymal ducts and he watched her choke for a moment and recover.

"You see," said Julia, "it's not so much these people I am angry with as the whole position. If I had gone the whole hog and married a butcher, I shouldn't mind. Our position is all right. Jack is a gentleman and I'm a lady, I hope. We can go into any society if we have money enough, but I have been cold shouldered out of a clique; that's what 'gets me.'"

"You are quite incomprehensible to me," said Carslake. "You escape from a stiff little set absolutely destructive to art and the common-sense that makes life worth living, and you are unhappy because they won't let you back. Do you mean to say you would take up your life in Closeminster again?"

"Never."

"Then why on earth do you grumble?"

"Because I am a woman. If I could only make these people eat humble pie *once* I wouldn't care if they were all swallowed by an earthquake next minute. Yesterday I met a woman whom they all adore and worship at a distance, simply because she has seven thousand a year and snubs them. I was on the point of getting her to sit on them for me, and then my husband appeared with some French theatrical people he had picked up, and my plan was spoiled."

"'The best laid plans of mice and men—'"

"'Gang aft a-gley!' Well, my plan has gone a-gley with a vengeance. However, there's no use bothering. What's the time?"

"Ten minutes to three," said Carslake, looking at his watch, "and dinner at the hotel is not till seven. Would you care to walk to the golf links?"

"I don't play golf."

"You couldn't if you wanted to; they are only just completing the links, and they won't be fit for play till next year."

"Let's go, then," said Julia. "Golf links

without players will be a new and pleasant sensation. Are they far?"

"Not too far to get there and back before dinner."

They started.

The sea-bathing society which incidentally manages the Casino of Monte Carlo exists primarily for the encouragement of open-air sport and healthy exercise, to judge by its efforts in these directions. At a cost of over forty thousand pounds M. Blanc has constructed a golf course on the mountain-tops above La Turbie, built a palatial club-house, and engaged a professional to superintend matters.

Julia and her companion began their ascent to the links by that zigzag military road up and down which the motor-cars now whizz laden with gamblers turned golfers, and vice versa.

There is nothing which brings people so close to one another as walking together, alone, through interesting scenery; horses form a third party; even bicycles have a dim sort of personality which obtrudes upon companionship.

The military road to the heights above La

Turbie is set at a steep gradient, yet one forgets the gradient, mounting from height to height of pure air and limitless view.

Half-way up they paused to look at the view. The sky was still blue and serene, not a cloud to be seen. Above the line of the far horizon lay a faint, faint tracery which at first glance seemed cloud, white summer clouds dimmed almost to nothing by distance.

"Look," said Carslake, pointing to it. "That's Corsica."

Julia looked. Ah, yes, now she could clearly perceive the ghostly peaks, snow crags, mountain shoulders, all as if vaguely sketched upon the blue.

"But it was not there five minutes ago," said she. "For I was looking out to sea the last time we stopped and I saw nothing of it."

"No," said Carslake, "it comes and goes; it is a mirage." He stood looking and shading his eyes; then he sat down on the stone wall which guards the seaward side of the road, and continued looking on the ghost of Corsica whilst Julia, leaning on the wall, looked too.

She was thinking of Napoleon, who had come

from that phantom country. It seemed a fit place for such a fatality to spring from.

"Have you ever been in Corsica?" she asked her companion at last.

"Have I ever been in Corsica?" replied he. "Yes, I have been in Corsica—Good God!—yes!"

His face had completely changed, and he spoke as though he were talking to himself with his eyes fixed on the distant vision.

CHAPTER XI

A STORY OF CORSICA

JULIA said nothing but watched him, waiting for what he would say next.

He sat for awhile as though he were unconscious that he had spoken. Then he turned to her.

"It's funny to see a place come up like a ghost in that fashion out of nothing. Do you know, I had a strange experience there that comes up at me just in the same way at times. It was a good while ago, I was yachting there and put in at the harbour of Ajaccio. I was a young man then—at least, a younger man than I am now. A man called Blakeney owned the yacht; there were two other men beside myself and a woman the wife of one of the others. The *Thistle* was the name of the boat, and she had done something to herself in a squall we met off the Balearics. Do you yacht much?"

"No," said Julia. "I have never set foot on one."

"Never do—unless it's for afternoon tea in the Solent, and even then you'll find it much more comfortable at the 'Gloucester.' We'd joined at Marseilles and had spent most of the time being seasick into one another's laps; yacht seasickness is a thing quite apart from steamboat seasickness. Oh, the rolling and pitching of that infernal *Thistle,* I can feel it still, and Blakeney made the matter worse for he never was ill. He used to come down to the saloon with his dripping oilskins on, the picture of health and brutal robustness and laugh at us for being ill. And when he went away again we'd have a sort of family prayers that the *Thistle* would split herself in two and drown Blakeney. Nothing else interested us much. At Ajaccio I cleared out and went ashore. I spent a month ashore and I did a lot of things; amongst others, I fell in love with a girl—"

Carslake laughed as he said the words.

"Was she pretty?" asked Julia.

"Yes, she was pretty enough; she sold sardines; used to carry them in a basket on her head—sort of a girl painters spoil on canvas,

but alive and with the sea for a background she was a picture. I never thought that she might have a lover amongst the ruffians of the place, but she had. Well, to cut a long story short, this gentleman finding I wanted a guide on an expedition into the interior, volunteered his services and I accepted them. He could often have murdered me on the journey when I was asleep, for we used to camp out, but he didn't—it's strange that when a man is after revenge he will delay and gloat over the business, often letting good opportunities escape. This chap was after loot, too, for I had a gold watch and chain and a fair sum of money on me, but revenge was his mainspring, and it's poor revenge to murder a man in his sleep.

"The affair took place on a bridge where the road is broken by a valley called the Chien Noir. He managed to get his knife home, but bungled it, and only cut my shoulder; then I got in and caught him. He was nothing; one of those creatures all nerves and blasphemy, with gold rings in his ears and a scapular round his neck, murder incarnate—and I flung him over the bridge. I was in a temper. I have only been

in a temper three times in my life, and when I get like that I don't consider things, and it was excusable, for the creature had been my companion, shared my bread, talked to me like a friend, slept by my side, and all the time with murder in his heart and his knife ready.

"Before the business occurred I had not been in a noticing mood. I had not noticed the height of the bridge. Now, when I looked over it seemed to me that I was looking over a precipice; four or five hundred feet below I saw my gentleman lying on a rock."

"Was he dead?" asked Julia; the pupils of her eyes were dilated, no story had ever interested her so much as this little episode told casually by the chief actor in it.

"I don't know. He didn't move. But I think we may presume so. I didn't bother in the least about it—a dead murderer is a very good thing."

"You didn't go down to look, or—help him."

"Certainly not."

"I think that was—inhuman."

"I am always inhuman to murderers. So is every man who has had to deal with life raw and

real. We have no use for murderers, and the sick sentimentality that allows the Apache to breed in Paris and the revolutionary in London seems to me a sentiment next door to madness."

"All the same—"

"There is no 'all the same' about it. The world is full of cruel devils; you are not looking at the matter from the standpoint of practical experience, you have never been man-handled by a ruffian or had your life threatened by an assassin, or you would know what I mean. Women have nothing to do with these matters, just as men have nothing to do with embroidery or household duties."

Julia, in spite of her repugnance, said nothing. She could not help a feeling of admiration for this man, so different from the ordinary man of the modern world. The story had at once given his personality atmosphere and background. The Corsican hills were the natural setting for that powerful form. Julia, like most women, had a keen appreciation of power. Brute strength in a man appeals to the ordinary woman more than intellectual strength, for she

knows quite well that the intellectual man is her slave but the brute is her master.

Julia was not quite an ordinary woman but sufficiently so to feel the charm of Caliban.

"And what happened then?" said she. "I mean, how did you leave Corsica?"

"I didn't leave immediately. I went back to Ajaccio and booked my passage by the next boat, which was not due to go for a week. The *Thistle* had taken herself off long before. Then began a comedy; dozens of people in the place knew what had happened, for they knew that the scoundrel had gone with me to murder me and when I came back alone they must have guessed; besides, the body must have been found, but no one dared to say anything. Corsica is the home of vendetta, you know. Well, nobody tried to vendetta me. I went about just as usual."

"And the girl?"

"Oh, she was so enraptured with the whole business that she became a nuisance. I married her."

"You married her!"

"To a boatman. I gave her a dot of a thousand francs."

"Thank you," said Julia stiffly. "I don't want to hear any more."

Carslake laughed. "You jump to bad conclusions too rapidly. There was nothing wrong. Our relationship was purely platonic. The world is always ready to jump to the same conclusion at the very words 'man' and 'woman'; and if that scoundrel who tried to knife me had only been born with more belief in honesty and breadth of mind he'd have had the girl and a thousand francs instead of a chuck over a precipice. Look! where is Corsica?"

Julia looked. The blue sky was stainless; Corsica had vanished as though the vision had never been. They resumed their way, ascending, always ascending, till they reached the plateau where the links are situated. High as the plateau is, far above it lies a hill-crest surmounted by a fort, surely the highest fortification in the world. Inland a gorgeous view of the Maritime Alps meets the gaze. Never did

the futilities of golf find themselves so grandly set as here between the sky and the sea, stared upon by the Alps that knew Napoleon.

Julia, after her snub, was silent; this man who was always talking down to her as if from a superior moral height would have been utterly odious to her but for some personal touch that saved him. Who was he, or what had he been in his past life? Beyond the fact that he had been introduced to her at the Qua'tz Arts fancy dress ball she knew nothing of him. She had even forgotten the name of the introducer. He never spoke of his family or his friends; notwithstanding the fact that she had told him all about herself and her people, even to the very place where she had been born. He was cultured and, despite the touch of barbarism that showed now and then, a gentleman. He bore the stamp of a good public school; no man ever loses this, yet he had something of the alien about him too. His university had evidently been the world.

They looked at the club-house which was building and criticised it. Then they walked on till club-house was out of sight and golf links

forgotten in the presence of those mountains, the view of which now spread like a panorama before them.

"Let's sit down for a moment," said Carslake. "Here's a bank that's simply a mattress of wild thyme; wicked to think of the Casino exploiting this place and letting loose golfers on it."

"You aren't a gamey person, are you?" asked Julia, glancing sideways at her companion.

"No, I have never had time for games."

"You've always been busy?"

"Yes," said Carslake, with a little laugh. "I've always been busy."

"Doing nothing?"

"Or everything—which amounts to the same thing."

"I'll try to guess your profession," said the ingenious one. "I love trying to guess people's business in life and I'm nearly always wrong. May I?"

"Fire away," said he.

"Well, we'll eliminate the Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Sailor. I don't think you are any of

those—and you're not a doctor. Am I right?"

"Perfectly."

"You're not an author—you're not a solicitor—you might be a barrister."

"Might I?"

"Yes, but you aren't—I give it up."

"So do I," said he.

"Besides, it's not of any interest to me to know a person's profession, one guesses just for fun. Do people's faces interest you?"

"Immensely."

"I'm always studying faces, and I'm going to make a confession; I'm nearly always wrong in my estimate of a person—that is to say, when I go entirely by his face."

"Or her face."

"No. I'm generally right about women. You see women for a million years or so have had nothing to fight men with but subterfuge, and men are so addled after a million years of delusion that they aren't able to judge women's faces. Haven't you met lots of men married to women whom they'd have flown from if Nature had given them the power to read a woman's

physiognomy. You often hear women saying, 'How on earth did that awful girl capture that nice man?' and then you laugh and say, 'Listen to those cats.' It's not cattishness at all, it's knowledge. No, women are nearly always right about women."

"And about men?"

"They are often wrong. Now you, for instance, I would never have judged you at first sight as caring for Art or books. I would have said you were a big-game hunter or—"

"And you would have been right."

"How?"

"I am a big-game hunter."

"You are?"

"Yes; why not?"

"Oh, of course, I suppose you shoot tigers and things, everyone does that now. I meant a man like Selous or that other man Schillings I saw once in Paris—a professional."

"I am a professional."

"A professional big-game hunter."

"Yes."

"Good heavens," said Julia, "then I was

right. Well, I congratulate you on having chosen a noble profession."

Carslake laughed, and there was a ring of real merriment in his laugh that made Julia glance at him. As a rule his laughter did not convey merriment.

"I don't see why you should laugh. I meant what I said. If I were a man it's the profession I'd choose. That, or being an explorer. I think the finest picture on earth is a man standing before a charging elephant and coolly taking aim at it, absolutely confident of his own power. Haven't you shot elephants?"

"Only for sport, never for profit."

"What do you hunt for profit, then?"

"Tigers and asses."

"Asses?"

"You have no idea what a dangerous animal the wild ass is, or you wouldn't be surprised. Or what a profitable one."

"Profitable? What on earth can you do with them?"

"I skin them."

Julia did not know whether he was in fun or in earnest. Yet he seemed perfectly in earnest,

and she concluded that a wild-ass skin had a value unknown to her. Then all at once the conviction came to her that all this was nonsense, and that he was playing with her as a man plays with a child, telling it absurdities, in answer to its artless questions.

Carslake had the stamp of a man of leisure and means; it was impossible to think that he hunted for profit and made his living in the most strenuous of all callings under the sun.

She concluded that this was another snub, the outcome of her diligent attempts to arrive at his status and business, and she sat without saying anything for a moment, burning inwardly at the supposed slight, yet utterly unable to resent it in words.

Neither of them noticed the fact that the clubhouse had vanished from sight.

From Bordighera or Ospedeletti you will often notice clouds upon La Turbie and the heights above it. One of these clouds had just settled upon the seaward side of the golf course. But the cloud which you would have admired from the Italian coast was here a wall of white fog. White as a leper and cold as death.

The sun dimmed slightly and Carslake looked up; then he turned and perceived the fog.

He sprang to his feet.

"By Jove! it's coming on thick. That's the worst of these mountains, they cloud up in no time."

Julia rose to her feet.

"Look!" said she, "it's coming along just like a moving wall. Shall we wait till it passes? If we don't we must walk right into it."

"It doesn't matter in the least," said he; "we'll get in to it, anyway. Come on."

They walked towards the cloud billow that was steadily drifting towards them. It looked so hard and definite that one might have thought meeting it one would have been at once engulfed; yet that was not so in the least. The air grew misty around them, tatters of fog blew past, the mist increased, and then gradually they were in the thick of it—absolutely cut off from the world; so that, if they had stepped aside one from the other for a few yards they would have been as invisible one to the other as two people in separate rooms.

"Isn't this vile?" said Julia, stopping dead.

"Utterly! but come on. I don't want to lose the track. Confound it! I believe I have."

Julia looked down at the ground; they could only see for a yard or so around them. The track they had come by was little more than a bridle road marked by a few wheel ruts; there were no signs of wheel ruts here—nothing but coarse grass and clumps of thyme.

"Let's try to the right," said Carslake.

They did and found nothing.

"What is the good in bothering about the track," said the girl. "I know quite well the direction we came from, and it's quite easy to take it."

"All right," said Carslake with a laugh; "you be the guide."

She led the way quite confidently.

"The club-house will be on our right," said she, "and the road down to La Turbie straight before us. It's quite simple."

The fog, as they went, grew thicker now, and now thinner; sometimes a faint trace of a ghastly pale and sinking sun appeared only to be instantly blotted out.

They had gone a hundred yards, or maybe a hundred and fifty, when Carslake stopped.

"Do you know," said he, "that the ground is rising? We are beginning to go up-hill."

"Perhaps it is only a rise in the ground," she replied. They went on, and the rise became so acute that all doubt was removed. It was the slope of a hill.

Julia could have cried. The depression of the fog added itself to her utter and sudden loss of confidence. She had been sure they were in the right direction.

"I thought as much," said Carslake.

"Then why didn't you say so?"

"What was the use? We were both equally lost, and you seemed so certain. I thought you might have some special instinct; one never knows. Anyhow, we have a base to start from; the club-house lies to the right of the hill, and if we can reach it we will find shelter till this stuff blows by. Come on."

They turned their backs to the hill and started, advanced some two hundred yards, and then found that they were going down-hill.

"We've missed the club-house," said Julia,

"but we've found the way to the road, and once we are on the road—" She stopped dead before a newly-cut drain into which they would have stepped the next moment.

"We didn't pass this thing when we came," said Carslake. "No, this isn't the way to the road, but it may lead us to the club-house."

A faint wind, icy chill, was moving around them; one could not tell from which direction it was blowing. Now and then it would cease, and every time it ceased, it seemed to come from a different quarter, a thing as tricky and sinister as the fog itself. To the fog was added an increasing darkness, for the sun was now sinking beyond the hills.

Julia shivered, chilled to the bone and chilled to the soul.

All at once she felt a cape of warmth on her shoulders; Carslake had taken off his coat and was wrapping her in it.

"No," she said. "Don't—please. I'm quite warm without it. You'll be frozen. I will *not*—"

"We'll talk about that later on," said he, buttoning the top button around her neck.

"I'm in command of the expedition just at present, and my orders must be strictly obeyed. Now, come on, and help me to find this place; first we'll try up the drain in the direction we don't think it is, then the other way."

"But you'll be frozen without your coat!"

"It takes a lot to freeze me. Now come on and let's see what we can do."

They skirted along the drain to where it ended at a patch of broken ground. Then they harked back.

It led them a long way, but at last they were rewarded. Something loomed up suddenly before them. It was a wall of the half-built clubhouse. The builders and workmen had knocked off work for the day and the place was deserted.

Carslake, leading the way, they skirted along the wall till they reached a doorway; the ceilings were not on in the lower rooms and the rafters alone stood and the floors were not finished. The dim light revealed a ghastly skeleton of a room—rough walls, earth floor, and rafter ribs above. A huge bundle of laths lay in one corner.

"That's all right," said he; "you wait for a minute and you'll see a change; there's firing enough and to spare, and I've got plenty of matches and some old letters to start with. Hold on here a minute till I prospect and see what else I can find."

She stood at the blank doorway whilst he went off.

In five minutes he returned laden. He had found three old sacks, a window-frame and an axe.

"Those fellows have left all their tools," he explained, "and there are window-frames enough to make a bonfire. The sacks will do to sit on, and I got an extra one for an overcoat. I'll start the fire first with laths and then we'll negotiate the window-frame."

He began breaking up laths, and when he had enough he made a pile on the floor of the half-finished room.

"My match-box is nearly full," said he, "but I'm going to light this fire with one match. What's the betting I don't?"

"A hundred to one," said Julia gloomily.

"Done," said he.

She watched him kneeling down and arranging the sticks in a scientific fashion; in the gloom and fog he was almost invisible. The whole business was horrible and depressing beyond words. Her shoulders were warm, for the coat was of Harris tweed, but her feet were like ice. She considered the fact that it must now be after six o'clock. By no possible means could they get back for dinner at the hotel. And if the fog did not lift, what would happen?

To be lost on a desolate moor of Iceland, or even Scotland, with a strange man; to be shipwrecked with him on a desolate coast—anything with a touch of danger and the fear of death in it would have been endurable. To be marooned on the golf-links of Monte Carlo was quite a different matter, and the prospect of spending the night here alone with Carslake was all she wanted to complete her depression.

As she stood watching him, she recalled all the instances she could recollect of men and women lost and alone with each other; a semi-lascivious and ill-written imitation of "The Blue Lagoon" by one of those female writers abhorred by Carslake crossed her mind, leaving

a shiver of disgust. The position was more farcical even than the farcical nonsense of the book travestying the island honeymoon of Dick and Emmeline Lestrange.

She thought of Mrs. Freke's face, of her father's face, and of the hundred other faces that would lengthen like drawn-out concertinas. If they could only know!

This thought almost gave her comfort, and with it came the first flame and crackle of the fire. The broken-up laths burnt splendidly and, touched off by the glow of them, her spirits rose. Why should she care or bother herself? The position was not of her making, and the promise of cheerfulness dispelled the misery of the fog and brought out the faint touch of adventure that lay in the situation.

The walls glowed and the fog in the room now became dispelled to a haze, whilst Carslake, axe in hand, attacked the window-frame. It was of fine solid wood and took a good deal of breaking up; but it burned to admiration.

Julia laughed.

"One would think you were breaking up your own property," said she. "I wonder what the

Casino people will say in the morning when the workmen come and find what we have done."

"They will say most likely, 'D—n those gypsies!' and the next lot of real gypsies that come along will catch it hot. Now I'm going for more sacks and frames. There's no chance of finding any food, but that doesn't matter much, as I expect this fog will lift before long. Won't be a minute."

In a few minutes he was back, with two more sacks and fuel enough and to spare. He placed two sacks on the ground near the fire and they sat down.

Julia unbuttoned his coat, took it from her shoulders, and gave it to him.

"I'm quite warm enough without it. It's a good thing there's no roof, and the smoke can escape through the rafters, else we might be smothered as well as baked. Will you look outside and see if there is any chance of the fog thinning?"

He went out and returned.

"It's as thick as ever and coming on black dark. I'm afraid there's no hope for us but to stick here. I'm awfully sorry. It was my

fault not noticing the change of the weather, and not keeping an eye out. But what's done is done and can't be mended."

He took a cigarette-case from his pocket and offered her a cigarette which she lit. Then he took a pipe and tobacco-pouch from another pocket, filled the pipe and began to smoke.

"There's one good thing about this house," said Julia. "There can't be any ghosts here."

"Why not?"

"It's too recent."

"That doesn't matter a bit; there are lots of outdoor ghosts quite ready to take shelter in anything with half a roof to it. If you don't believe me, go to the Orkneys or Shetlands, or any place where ghosts are lively, and stick up any sort of old shack, and it will be haunted almost before the roof's on, if you believe your gillie."

"Do you know that superstition some people have that the first tenants of a house mark it, so to speak, with their personality and make it lucky or unlucky, as the case may be, for all the tenants who follow them."

"I think I have heard something like it."

"Well, I've just been thinking, we are the first tenants of this place."

Carslake laughed.

"That's a funny idea too; and as this place will be inhabited chiefly by gamblers, and as most gamblers are unlucky, then it follows, or rather precedes, that we must be unlucky."

"We certainly are," said Julia, glancing at the doorway, where the firelight struck the fog which seemed still as thick as ever. "What on earth *will* we do if it doesn't lift? There's no chance of the hotel sending out a search party, for they don't know where we've gone to. They'll think—I don't know what they'll think."

"Let them think," replied he.

Then they were silent for awhile, gazing at the crackling fire and listening to the sounds from outside. The moors up here are full of life, hares and wild rabbits, birds—which the Casino people, to give them credit, protect with the most stringent laws—stoats, field-mice, and numerous humble folk of that sort.

They could hear occasionally the cry of a bird, or the rustle of a small body in the grass,

and as a background to these trivial sounds they could perceive the vast silence of the hills; the mountains spread their silence around them like a cloak.

After awhile Carslake got up and went to the door.

"There's not a sign of it lifting," said he, as he came back and took his place by the fire; "it looks as if we'll have to camp here all night unless you like to risk it and make another attempt to find the road. I'm willing, but I warn you, if we get lost it will be a bad business, for the dark has shut down now on top of the fog."

"Never!" said Julia, with a shudder. "I have had enough of groping in a fog."

"If you like," said he, "I'll start alone and try and find my way down to La Turbie and get help."

"And leave me by myself! I would be dead of fright in ten mintes. No, there's no use bothering, it's not our fault. I don't care. If you'll do the fire up and if you could find me an extra sack or two for a pillow I'll try and go to sleep, I'm dead tired. It's the mountain air, I suppose."

"Right," said Carslake. "It's a comfort to have to deal with sensible people sometimes."

He got up and went out, returning presently with a couple more sacks and another window-frame.

"Lucky thing the sacks aren't dirty," said he. "I suppose they brought them up here full of cement for the foundations; anyhow, they are clean enough, and you can spread your handkerchief for your head to rest on."

He rolled them up and made a pillow of them for her; she lay down and then he covered her with a sack. Then she lay watching him as he prepared his own bed and some more firewood.

He was absolutely unconcerned, and as she watched him she could not help congratulating herself on having such a companion. She conjured up visions of being placed in a similar position with, say, a nervous curate. Then she thought, with a slight qualm of the heart, of Jack. Jack was doubtless now sitting biting his nails and waiting for her return. The hotel people would tell him that Carslake had not returned either. She pictured Jack waiting up all night for her and his face on her return in

the morning. This thought dispelled her qualms and gave her almost pleasure. She hoped the incident would be Bohemian enough for his taste.

"Where have you been?"

"We stopped all night in the Golf Club-house on account of the fog."

It would be a fit return for the Freke incident. Unknown to herself, her antagonism to her husband had been growing steadily, despite the fact that she had sunk the incident of the day before. Her anger against him had passed, but had left that irritation of spirit which, in woman, is more dangerous than anger and will prompt them often to the most unaccountable acts.

"Well, there we are, settled for the night," said Carslake, sitting down on his sack and refilling his pipe. "What we *must* do is to get away from here bright and early before the workmen arrive. I have a particular objection to having to pay for those window-frames, not to say being hauled before M. Blanc; it's just the thing for the newspapers. Can't you see the headlines in the English papers. 'Amusing

incident on the Golf Course of Monte Carlo.' "

"Don't!" said Julia; then she began to laugh. "After all, it would be rather fun; fancy my father's face!—and it wouldn't be a bad advertisement for my book."

"There you are," said he, "the author speaks out. I believe if an author were being tortured to death by Red Indians his last words would be 'what an advertisement this will make for my last book!' "

"And why shouldn't he? It only proves that he thinks more of his work than of himself. Shows his sense, too; there's nothing in the world worth living for but just one's own work. It's the thing I'm going to live for in future."

Carslake laughed.

"There it is at last," said he.

"What?"

"The confession of the thing I divined in you at the first. You remember what I said to you the other night at the Casino?"

"And what did you divine in me, if you please?"

"The artist."

"What a wonderful discovery—a safe one, too, for nowadays nine out of ten have the artist in them."

"Not one in a thousand, two thousand—you may say three thousand, if you like."

"Do you know, that is the first compliment you ever paid me," said Julia.

"It's a pretty poor compliment," replied Carslake.

Julia bridled. "I couldn't imagine you paying a decent, well-fed compliment," said she; "and I know quite well you have only produced this scrawny thing as a prelude to saying something disagreeable. Well, say it."

"I have nothing unpleasant to say; at least, I wish to say nothing unpleasant; but I have a most unfortunate habit of saying what I think to be the truth."

"And you think I have the artist in me?"

"Yes, I do."

"And what is your definition of the 'artist' if I may ask the question?"

"The artist in a person is a hateful thing that produces sometimes divine results."

"And why is it hateful, the poor artist?"

"It is hateful because it is inhuman; at least, it has the inhuman faculty of feeding on the sorrows and joys of men and growing strong upon them—on love, too."

"I don't in the least understand you."

"Well, look at George Sand. The artist in her simply battened on her love-affairs; to make books it had to eat men's hearts."

"She was the image of a horse," said Julia.

"Yes, she was not unlike a sentimental yellow horse of the female sex, but that did not prevent her from having love-affairs. The artist in her attracted its quarry. It is a terrible tenant of the human soul, this animal that drinks tears and eats hearts, and writes books and poems, or makes statues and pictures; or simply does nothing but enjoy itself watching the beauties and tragedies of life."

"And you think I am possessed of this demon?"

"I think if a great tragedy happened to you, you would, after a while, make a great book of it; you couldn't help it, and you couldn't help taking artistic pleasure in the work."

"Thanks."

"There's nothing to get angry about. It is a great gift, and when I said 'pleasure' I did not mean sordid pleasure."

"Well," said Julia. "I'm not likely to have the chance, only small things come my way, and to make a great tragedy out of my petty surroundings would be like the old Egyptians trying to make bricks without straw."

"God sometimes provides the straw," replied Carslake.

The warmth of the fire, her tiredness, and the soporific mountain air were having their effects upon Julia.

Whether the Demon of Art had her in possession or not ceased to be of the slightest interest to her, she saw Carslake getting up to put more sticks on the fire; then he seemed to grow immensely in height and then to dwindle to nothingness; then she was talking to Jack on the Casino steps and Mrs. Freke was coming out of the building with a bundle of bank-notes in her hand, dressed in a hop-sack skirt and a beehive bonnet; then even dreamland vanished with all its fantastic people chloroformed out of existence by the mountain air.

At four o'clock in the morning Julia awoke. The fire was still burning feebly; it had evidently been replenished during the night, and by her side about a yard away, Carslake, on his sack and with another sack over him, was asleep and breathing heavily. He looked like a tramp or an outcast of an aggravated type. The stars were shining down through the spaces between the rafters; the fog was gone.

Her mind had risen suddenly from the profoundest sleep to vivid consciousness—that terrible consciousness of early morning which accentuates everything unpleasant, placing cedillas under extenuating circumstances and circumflex accents the size of mansard roofs over indiscretions without in the least hiding them.

The fog last night had seemed like a decent cloak on the situation; the winking stars, telling her that the cloak had been stripped away, seemed laughing at her. She lay motionless, glancing up at them, turning her head now and then for a view of the room and her companion.

And the worst of it was that she had gone to sleep as Julia Revell and awakened as Julia Ingatestone. It was the tame rabbit that had

to face the circumstances of the case, and its first instinct was to stampede. Crawl out into the night and make for La Turbie and respectability. This instinct was checked by fear of the lonely darkness, and by the recollection that the hotel would not be open for some hours yet.

So she lay still, biting on the bullet and staring the odious position in the face.

What would the hotel people say! And it would be impossible to tell them the truth, for they might talk, and then the Casino people might get to know; and the burnt window-frames would be the bonfire of her reputation.

Then the thought of Jack came to ease her. It was all his fault; only for him the Freke incident would not have occurred; they would have stayed on in happy, healthy Monte Carlo amidst sane folk, who, whatever indiscretions they committed, at least committed them like reasonable mortals.

This business was not only horrid, it was laughable. The picture around her was like a page torn from *Le Rire*. The well-dressed woman, the well-dressed man, lying covered with hopsacks, or was it mortar sacks, in the

awful, bleak, unfinished room. It seemed to her that she was the sport of the gods, an inferior species of gods—French Pucks.

She listened to Carslake breathing evenly in his sleep, and then across her soul came a wave of revolt against society and its rabbit-hutch morals.

Society whose bedrock belief is not in God but in the fantastic idea that a man and woman under certain circumstances will behave in a certain way.

She dropped off to sleep again and was awakened by Carslake's voice.

The sky, seen through the rafters, was of the colour of forget-me-nots, a quite needless tint as far as Julia was concerned.

"It's time or us to go," said Carslake, who was standing up in the act of stretching himself; "the sun is not over the hills yet, but it will be soon, and those workmen may be here at any minute."

Julia rose in a panic and put on her hat.

"What time is it?" she asked as she drove the pins through.

"I don't know, my watch has stopped; for-

tunately, I woke up in time, though. Are you ready—that's right."

They came out into the fresh, sharp morning air.

The sun had risen over Italy and was striking the seraphic blue of the early morning sea. The snow-clad Alps, far inland, were all flushed and rosy and golden in the level light. Only the club-house and the golf course were still in shadow.

They found the road without meeting any one and began the descent to La Turbie.

Half-way down they were passed by a motor lorry filled with workmen; they were the workmen ascending to the club-house.

"They'll never suspect it was us," said Carslake, "we look far too respectable."

"Do we," replied Julia. "I don't feel it; I feel grubby, and I'm sure my face is black, and I don't know in the least if my hat's on back to front or not. However, it's all in the morning's work. I say."

"Yes."

"How about going back to the hotel—hadn't we better go separately?"

Carslake laughed.

"I don't see the good as far as the hotel people go, simply because—because—"

"I know—they'll know we were both out last night. Were people ever put in such a position before! We *can't* tell them about the fog, for if we did we'd have to tell about the club-house, and then there's the possibility that they might talk, and we'd be had up, and the thing would get in the papers. I could tell the landlady that I stayed in Monte Carlo with Mrs. Freke—Mrs. Freke would never know. But explanations are abominable—and no one ever believes them."

"Bother explanations," said he; "we'll face it out. No, better still, we won't. I won't go to the hotel at all. I'll go right down to Monte Carlo and won't turn up at the hotel till later on. You go to the hotel, and when you arrive, should you see anyone, simply say you stayed last night with some friend. I don't come into it at all."

"Ah!" said Julia, "that's better; but it seems a shame that all this bother should fall on you. You must be longing to get back to

your rooms and a bath, and now you have to go down to Monte Carlo. What will you do there?"

"I'll be all right, they know me at the Hôtel de Paris, you need not worry about me."

"Well, I'll never forget it."

"Neither shall I."

"I meant the kindness of your thought—most men don't think for other people like that."

They passed down the zigzag road, now bright with sunshine, till they reached the National Road and the road that led downwards to Monte Carlo. Here they parted and Julia took her way to the hotel.

She had not gone far when she saw a figure walking in the same direction and only a couple of hundred yards ahead. It was Jack.

She quickened her pace almost to a run; she was anxious to get the interview over and done with. She firmly believed that Jack had been out hunting for her and was now returning to the hotel after his fruitless quest.

Then as she drew nearer some instinct told her that Jack had not been hunting for her, that he had been out all night, and was only now re-

turning from Monte Carlo. There was a hang-dog look about the unfortunate Jack to her eyes; his hat was tilted on the back of his head and he walked in a spiritless manner—almost shuffled. He was wearing, too, the light overcoat which he always wore over evening clothes.

"Jack!" She was only a few yards from him when she called, and he turned. He looked weary and worn—yes, he was in evening clothes still, and his tie was crumpled, and there was a wine spot on his shirt-front.

"Jack," cried Julia, "where have you been?"

"Down in Monte," replied he. "Couldn't get back in time. What are you doing out at this hour?"

"I came out to look for you."

"Oh!"

They passed along towards the hotel. Julia did not see in the least why she should enter into the story of her adventure of the night before, and for the first moment or two she blessed the good luck of this meeting; for now there would not be the slightest scandal at the sight of her return—with her husband. Yet, strange to say, this ease of mind, so far from making

her indulgent towards the other, acted in a diametrically opposite manner.

His debauched and crumpled appearance disgusted her; her nerves were "frazzled" by the adventure of the night, the keen morning air, and the fact that she had eaten nothing since yesterday at noon. Then the remembrance of Fatou Gaye came to her, and the thought that as the Bachellry people were the only friends he had in Monte Carlo, he had doubtless been with them—or some of them. So that it came about that instead of being brought to book for the adventure of the past night, Julia, who had completely forgotten them before this husband who had also been out all night, began the attack.

"It's all very well saying you couldn't get back, but you could have walked," said she.

"Oh, could I?" replied Jack. If he had known the facts, the humour of the situation would have grasped him even in his depressed state; but he fancied Julia to have been out hunting for him since daylight; his mind rapidly pictured her sitting up waiting for him all the endless night. It only wanted this, on top

of all his other doings, to make him feel a villain.

"You could. And what I want to know is, where have you been?"

"Where have I been?" said the unfortunate.

"Yes, where have you been?"

CHAPTER XII

THE ADVENTURES OF JACK

You will remember that Jack Revell arrived at the La Turbie platform of the Funicular railway at half-past six the evening before. If he had looked up he would have seen the cloud that engulfed Julia and Carslake forming on the hill-tops, but he did not look up. He made for the hotel and found to his relief that Julia was out.

His reason for coming home lay in the fact that to enter the Casino in the evening one must be in dress-clothes, the Casino held him like a gin. It was utterly impossible for him to resist the temptation to return there that evening, and as he put it to himself, "try to do something."

Even your gambler, who has lost everything, is still under the fascination of the Casino. If he has five francs in his pocket he will return there, and he would return there and gamble away his *viatique* only that the authorities, who know human nature, bar his entrance.

Finding his wife out, Jack Revell got into his evening clothes with all dispatch, and telling the landlord of the hotel to inform Julia that he was dining with a friend, took the next train down to Monte Carlo.

He felt hungry, and going to the same café where he had lunched with Carslake, he had dinner; then he strolled over to the Casino.

He had in his pocket-book the hundred and twenty-five pounds in notes and some loose money in his pockets; he searched in every pocket and marshalled the odd money, which amounted to three or four louis. Then he began a tour of the tables, glancing at the play and the players and waiting for some indication of Fate to begin.

One is driven to say that there is positively such a thing as luck, let scientific men sneer as they will. This thing we call luck has nothing to do with the thing we call chance. The thing we call chance is producing runs of colours like this every day at Monte Carlo—red, black, red, black, red, red, red, red, red. Luck is the imp who sits in the sub-conscious mind and tells the conscious mind what chance is about to do, and

the conscious mind backs red, red, red, red, red, and so has a run of luck.

How luck plunges into the next moment like a diving dog and brings up in his teeth the thing that is going to happen I cannot say, an excusable ignorance in a world where all philosophy is based on two grand illusions, Time and Space; but that the thing does happen—of that I am certain.

As certain as I am of the folly of those who try to find out what chance is going to do by means of a system formulated by their conscious brains and based on a record of what chance has done.

All gamblers will bear me out when I say that there comes to the player at times an *estro,* during which he feels himself borne along on a propitious tide. He feels that he can't do wrong, and he is right; he wins, and wins, and wins, whilst the fools who sit around pricking cards and fumbling with ghastly formulæ wonder at his luck.

You should not play unless you are in the vein. That is the only system worth considering at all; if you add to it the corollary—leave

off when luck gets tired. Give the diving dog a chance, for he soon gets tired, and presently he will begin to bring up wrong numbers and colours in his mouth.

Jack Revell passed from table to table, undecided, watching the players, sometimes trying a five-franc piece as if to test his luck, losing now, and now winning.

Then, from irritation more than anything else, he began to play for bigger stakes, won, lost, and won again. He obtained a seat and luck came to him. He won fifty pounds in twenty minutes, and growing cautious, suddenly reduced his stakes to a louis at a time and continued winning, flew into a temper with himself for his caution, increased his stakes and began to lose; lost till a hundred pounds were swept away, caught himself up, and, playing for a louis at a time, won five times in succession.

Then he had a succession of small losses, and then, without knowing how it came about, he found himself floating on the flood of success, staking and winning largely and feeling that this would never end. He was playing like this

when he suddenly found that the game was over.

He had not noticed the croupier's words at the last spin of the ball; the tables had closed for the night, and the crowd was breaking up and dispersing.

Jack looked at his possessions; he had a hundred and forty pounds, fifteen pounds more than he had started with. He felt that Fate had intervened to prevent him winning, and certain that if she had only held her hand for another twenty minutes he would have been saved.

The tide of chance into which luck had been diving so valiantly had suddenly vanished, dried, cut off at its source, leaving only mud and potsherds, tin kettles and dead cats to the gazer on the bank.

He left the Casino and went over to the Café de Paris, where presently he met Bachellry, who had just left the theatre, accepted an invitation to supper, and after supper adjourned to Bachellry's rooms for a game of cards. Two other men, friends of the actor, joined them, and they sat playing till three o'clock in the

morning, when, it being too late for Jack to return to La Turbie, Bachellry made him up a bed on the sofa in his sitting-room.

At dawn Jack awoke with a headache, and the remembrance that he had lost over ten pounds at cards; this small loss seemed to him worse than all his other doings. It was the top knot.

He thought of Julia left alone at La Turbie, Julia, who at that moment was awaking from sleep in the club-house on the links; he thought of himself sitting playing cards whilst she doubtless had been sitting up, wondering what had become of him.

He felt odiously in the wrong, a supportable feeling, had it not been backed by the dead black fact of the lost money. One can take refuge from one's every-day conscience in the thought "I will do better," or even in callousness; but one cannot take refuge from the conscience aroused by the loss of money. She is a very practical lady, and, hide in any hole you will, she pulls you out and makes you face your deeds. The purse is always soft and tender, let the heart be as hard as it may.

But with Jack Revell it was the combination

of the grieving heart and grieving purse, and the pain was so acute that he left the couch, determined to leave the hotel at once, fly to La Turbie and confess all to the unfortunate Julia.

He could hear Bachellry snoring in the next room. That happy man, who had won two louis at cards, and had drunk nothing but *eau sucré*, was sleeping the sleep of the just, and heard nothing of the evasion of his guest, who, finding an early morning Boots at the end of the passage, got let out and was soon on his upward way to La Turbie.

He was approaching the Hôtel de France when he heard Julia's voice behind him, and the tone of it gave the first chill to his repentance and desire for confession.

. . . . . .

"You could. And what I want to know is, where have you been?"

"Where have I been?" said the unfortunate.

"Yes, where have you been? You never thought, apparently, of what I might be suffering whilst you were enjoying yourself."

"Enjoying myself!" Jack laughed a laugh as mirthless as the "ha! ha!" which printers use

at the instigation of novelists as a means for indicating laughter.

"Oh, you needn't laugh; you don't hide anything by pretence like that. You have been with those people, you have been with that woman!"

"What woman?" asked Jack, astonished almost into interest, and forgetting for half a moment his money troubles.

"That actress woman. Oh, don't pretend!"

"I'm not pretending."

"Well, answer me a plain question: Have you been to the 'Côte d'Azure'?"

"Yes, I have!"

"That's enough. You cannot divorce yourself from those creatures; like flies to like. Well, you may keep them for all I care, live with them—"

"For goodness' sake don't go on like this!" cried Jack. "I've done no harm. I was only sitting up playing cards."

"And never thinking if I were sitting up waiting for you or not."

"I was so bothered in my mind that I thought of nothing."

"Bothered—and what bothered you?"

"Oh, one thing or another."

They had reached the hotel and were passing in, when the landlord's wife, who was assisting at the tidying of the *salle-à-manger,* advanced to Julia with effusion.

"Oh, I am so glad to see Madame. I feared some accident when Madame and Monsieur did not return last night and sent no message, so I sat up till one o'clock; and even then, when I went to bed, I told Jules, who sleeps on the ground-floor, to sleep with one ear open in case you knocked. But all is well since you have come back safe and sound."

"Thank you, thank you," said Julia. She could not trust her voice further and walked straight in, across the *salle-à-manger,* upstairs to her room.

Jack followed her.

He came into the room behind her and glanced at the bed which had not been slept in.

"Julia," said he, "where were you last night?"

Now Julia, in her ordinary senses, and untrammelled by the words she had lately spoken,

would have answered him the truth, told the story of her happenings and laughed at it. She would have told the whole thing in her ordinary laughing mood.

But she was in no laughing mood, and, besides, she had compromised herself by the hinted lie that she had been waiting up for him. In her exhausted and nerve-fretted condition the whole business of the night before seemed absurdly portentous, and the ill-luck of the landlady's speech at such a moment seemed to be the last straw of Fate, the last act of a social drama, in which she was the sorry heroine, pelted by all manner of small spites and lured at last into this impossible position.

Anger blazed out in her—anger not against Fate, but against Jack, the man who had made her an impossible woman amongst her own set; the man who had dragged her into Bohemianism; the man who had disgraced her before the Frekes, who had been playing cards all night with the Bachellry crowd, and who now in that voice dared to ask her where she had been the night before.

She turned on him with her face flaming.

"Go and find out!"

He stepped back, as though she had struck him.

"Julia!"

"Well, what are you staring at? You dare to ask me where I have been, and you—you—*you*—where have you been last night, disgracing yourself, disgracing me with that dirty crowd and your painted French actresses? Oh! if you had seen yourself the other day—if you had seen yourself and how you looked before the eyes of gentlefolk—yes, and the woman I was with cut me dead yesterday because of you; just because of you and the people you were with; cut me dead because of my husband. Look at yourself now! Just go and look at yourself—like a night waiter who had been up all night. No wonder that woman cut me. You have dragged me into the gutter—and I hate you!"

"You have not answered my question," replied he, pale to the lips; "all that has nothing to do with my question."

"Your question! Leave my room! Leave

my room! I wish to have nothing more to say to you. Leave my room and leave me some money."

He took the pocket-book containing the bank-notes from his pocket and flung it on the floor; then he left the room, went to his own room at the end of the little passage and began to change his clothes.

Everything was over and done with. Julia's manner told him all. No innocent woman would have replied to his question like that.

Heavens! what a thing to come up against in life; and he had been in despair all the time about the money, killing himself because of his fancied infidelity to Julia in this matter, whilst she—!

Then, as he sat half-dressed on the side of his bed, the thought came to him—who was she with?

Till this moment he had not considered this important question at all, simply because, till this moment, he had not recovered fully from her speech.

That speech had been his most terrible experience in life, spoken as it was by a woman

with whom his somewhat simple and primitive nature was bound up heart and soul.

It was a brutal and desperate speech, and he could not in the least put together the component parts of the long fuse of which it was the explosive ending. Nor could he gauge what social convention means to a woman, and especially a woman of Julia's type, clear-headed, clever, who has seen for herself at close quarters the second-rate and the *déclassé;* the tawdry and tinsel of a society wherein women may be absolutely correct in their behaviour and yet be banned on account of their world.

Now, sitting on the side of the bed, the question came to him: Who has she been with? And the answer, as swiftly from the depths of his being: No one.

He knew her far too well, knew her instinctively, subconsciously, and with the only knowledge which is certain. And yet against this absolute knowledge his mind warred struggling to believe her guilty. And he *had* believed her guilty till that crystallising question searched the depths of his soul. Who has she been with? No one. The thing was impossible—absolutely,

wherever she had been she had not wronged him.

But that instinctive consciousness did not soothe him. The master fact remained that she no longer loved him, and that everything was over between them; he himself had changed, and in the last half hour a gulf wide as infinity had come between himself and the man who had come up to La Turbie, conscience-stricken and craving for confession.

He did not want to see her again, so he told himself; he did not want to speak to her again —and as for their living together again that was impossible.

The comic part of the situation lay in the fact that he had no money, with the exception of a few louis he was penniless. Julia had all the bank-notes remaining, and if he had to apply to her for money he would have to account for the remaining bank-notes. That was impossible under the present conditions. Impossible to go to the woman who had spoken to him like that and say: "I have gambled away half your money, lend me five hundred francs and go back to Paris." It would be im-

possible to go to the management and ask for the *viatique,* for he had been winning when he left off play.

He would *have* to see her, and not only see her but tell her all.

These thoughts occurred to his troubled mind as he finished dressing. The position might have been evolved from the brain of some fertile dramatist, but its ingenuity did not appeal to the unfortunate Jack. He came downstairs and took his seat at the little table where *déjeuner* had been laid for him and Julia. He knew she would not appear and he sat down to the meal mechanically, prompted by a dim craving for something which, when it was placed before him, he knew to be coffee.

He ate two rolls and finished all the butter on the little dish, and, as he ate, the problem before him took shape from all the forms of the things about him.

"You are penniless," said the coloured bottles behind the counter of the bar; "your own fault for being such a fool. We don't know what you are going to do—get drunk and jump into the sea—best thing."

"Don't ask a modest maiden like me," said the apple-red cheek of the serving girl. "I'm clean and happy, that's all I know about anything."

The table where he had sat with Carslake on the night of his first coming to La Turbie had something different to say. "Ask Carslake," said the table. "He's well off and a good fellow, and he'll lend you the money to get back to Paris."

Here was an idea at last. He felt certain Carslake would lend him the money—then he began to doubt. Would he? Carslake was a very nice fellow and seemed well-off; all the same, they were really very little acquainted.

Then again he would have to tell Carslake the whole story unless he invented a lie, and he was beyond doing that. Even if he were so disposed he had not invention enough to construct a plausible tale.

No, he would have to go to Carslake straight and tell him everything; that seemed possible till he came to the details. He could not possibly tell Carslake that he had gambled with

Julia's money, nor of the reason of their present quarrel.

Then all at once he came to the determination to apply to Carslake, giving no reason at all, simply saying, I have had a quarrel with my wife and I wish to return to Paris.

The landlord's wife had entered with some glasses on a tray. He asked her was Monsieur Carslake down yet?

"Monsieur Carslake," replied the woman. "Why, monsieur, he was like you, he did not return last night."

"He did not return!"

"No, monsieur; he did not even dine here as is his habit, nor did he come in last night. He has not yet returned."

"Oh!" said Jack slowly, "he has not yet returned. Thank you."

The woman went to the buffet and began arranging the glasses upon it whilst Jack, casting his napkin on the table, rose up. He wanted to go out, but he had left his hat in his room so he had to go up for it.

Outside he walked away in the direction of Eze.

It was a glorious morning, but he saw nothing of the sky, or the sea, or the mountains; he remembered nothing of his money worries—everything was obliterated by the horrible fact that the woman had flung in his face.

Carslake! Of course, it was quite clear. She and Carslake had been friends from the first; they had danced several times together at the ball in Paris. He had talked to her about her book. He had talked to her about its morals. He had said that he would shoot any man that betrayed him if he were a married man. Why should they have touched on that subject at all? Leaving all that aside, he was the only man she knew here, and they had both acted in the same way last night. The thing was mathematically demonstrable; he would have been a fool not to believe the evidence, and still in his heart of hearts, beneath all the anger and horror and furious confusion of his mind there was a dissentient, a blind unreasoning objector who still said: "Impossible! impossible! Julia could not do it. I don't know anything about anything that *you*

know. I only know what I feel to be the truth."

So far from easing him, this check to the fury of his imagination only increased that fury, and had Carslake appeared before him then he would have attacked him without a word or preface.

It was not till he had gone half-way to Eze and narrowly escaped destruction by a motor brake filled with American tourists from Nice, that he could call order amongst his thoughts.

He sat down on a stone wall and watched the lizards scuttling about in the sunshine.

His thoughts, called to order, were dull and listless, and after awhile he got up and returned by the road he had just travelled.

What should he do about Carslake? He had no positive proof at all against the man. If he were to go up to Carslake and say, "What were you doing last night that you did not return to the hotel?" Carslake, if he did not tell him to mind his own business, would undoubtedly ask him: "Why do you ask me?" He could not reply to that question. He was ab-

solutely stalemated in this business unless he could obtain positive proof.

He passed the hotel without even looking up at the windows, walked on, and took the downward road that leads to Monte Carlo.

Here at a café he found two friends of man in distress, a cigarette and a whisky and soda.

Under their influence he took a calmer view of things and, sitting at a little table sheltered by the awning of the café began to take notice of the people passing by.

He had not been sitting long like this when a girl and a man came and sat down at the adjoining table. The girl was the same girl who had stopped Carslake in the street; the man was well dressed, well-groomed, black-bearded, and having that indefinable stamp which the Republic had affixed to the French official classes.

Two glasses of vermouth were served to them, and they plunged at once into a conversation at once animated and serious.

"Carslak."

The word sprang out of their unintelligible talk like a spark struck by the jarring together of the two hard voices.

They were talking of Carslake, there could be no manner of doubt about that.

He strained his ears to catch what they were saying, but without avail.

Now the woman was taking something from the breast of her dress; it was a bundle of letters. She selected several and gave them to the man to read. He read them carefully and handed them back. Then the conversation went on for awhile longer and at last the bearded man rose, bowed, and went off.

The woman sat for a little longer glancing at the people who were passing by; then she rose also.

Jack followed her as she left the place, followed her as she passed down the street, and at the corner, where she paused as if undecided which way to go, came up to her and raised his hat.

"Excuse me, mademoiselle, but I think you are acquainted with a gentleman whom I know —Monsieur Carslake."

She started and glanced him all over.

"Monsieur Carslak. Excuse me, monsieur, but I do not know your name; I have not ever

seen you before. How, if it is not impertinent to ask, do you know that I am acquainted with Monsieur Carslak?"

"Why, mademoiselle, I saw you speaking to him the other day in the streets; I saw that your discussion was not of the friendliest nature and he told me about you."

"*Ma foi!* he told you about me!" cried she, reddening.

"Please don't misunderstand me. I told you he was an acquaintance of mine; I did not say a friend. I wish I had never met him; but having met him I am most anxious to know who he is and more about him. You see, I am quite frank with you; I will tell you at once my position. I believe this man to have done me a great injury; I cannot yet make sure, but I would give a great deal to know where he was last night and what he was doing. Can you tell me?"

"I—I don't know where he was; I don't know anything of his doings. But, monsieur, perhaps can tell me where he is staying?"

As she spoke, Jack watched her and wished that he had not enlisted this questionable per-

son on his side. Those eyes, beady and restless as the eyes of a bird, that mouth sensuous yet characterless, that face good looking yet devoid of softness, sense, or any trace of kindliness, all these spoke of the negative and the evil of littleness, yet at a distance this woman, well dressed as she was, had about her the quality of attraction. Passing her you would have thought her good-looking; speaking to her you would have found her plain in all charms that constitute true womanhood.

She was Monte Carlo incarnate.

He drew back from the position he had taken up.

"I am sorry I cannot give you that information," said he.

She understood him to mean that he did not know. She shrugged her shoulders.

"It does not matter, they will easily find him. Well, monsieur, you may rest easy—" She paused as though she had suddenly remembered something; then she laughed, and nodding adieu to Jack, passed on.

What did she mean? From the woman herself, her tone, her manner, her words and the

fact that he had seen her quarreling with Carslake and talking about him to that official-looking individual a moment ago, he guessed that Carslake was the object of some attack.

Here was a new element of uneasiness introduced into a situation almost unparalleled. He did not care a button about Carslake, he was thinking of Julia.

If Carslake were involved in some discreditable business and the police were upon his track, and if Julia had allowed herself to fall under the spell of this man—what might not be the result?

The genuine gold in his character showed in the fear for the wife who had spoken to him like a brute and who, according to the evidence of his eyes and ears, had been unfaithful to him.

It was not scandal he feared; the word had little meaning for him in its society sense, it was the idea of danger for Julia in the hands of a villain that rose before him as a phantom, formless with the formlessness of a hundred forms in one.

He knew quite well the hypnotic power that

some men have over women, and the idea of Julia helpless as a bird in the hands of this fowler stung him so to life, that for a moment he was about to rush back to La Turbie, seek an interview with her—and what? The last clause brought him to a standstill.

What should he say to her: "Beware of Carslake!"

He could see her face at the words. Guilty or innocent, she would turn on him at such a warning. No, an interview with her would be useless as far as Carslake was concerned.

Then the very thought of such an interview brought up before him, vividly, the scene of that morning and her speech. That unforgivable and unforgettable speech. He walked away through the Casino gardens, till he reached the walk overlooking the sea and the pigeon-shooting ground.

The "sportsmen" were not at work this morning, so there was no slaughter of trapped birds to spoil the vision of the enchanted sea.

He took his seat in the sunshine, and leaving all the greater problems that faced him to look after themselves for awhile, felt in his pockets,

produced all the money he had about him and counted the coins. There were four twenty-franc pieces and some silver. He replaced the money in his pocket, crossed his legs, folded his arms and yawned.

The stimulus of the whisky he had taken some time before had left him, leaving behind it an awful flatness of spirits which whisky alone could relieve.

He got up and returned to the town, and at the Café de Paris sat down and imbibed three more whiskies, so that presently his flat spirits became inflated till his mental condition became like that of a soap-bubble, capable of taking coloured impressions from all objects but incapable of thought or worry.

He wished to be moving, yet he did not know of any place to which he cared especially to go, till the idea of the Musée Océanographique struck him, picture fashion, on the surface of his intelligence, and rising from his seat, he wandered off towards Monaco.

CHAPTER XIII

THE ADVENTURES OF JULIA

"WELL, that's done with!" said Julia.

Her speech was still ringing in her ears, and the words "I hate you!" repeated themselves echo fashion in her mind. It seemed to her that someone else had made that speech, someone else had said those words—with her consent.

The irritation that had been growing in her mind not only from the commencement of the Monte Carlo journey, but long before that; the irritation caused by the fusty nastiness of the Pension Nix, the petty money worries, the sense of home antagonism and thwarted ambition, the irritation of the journey to Monte Carlo with the theatrical people, the Freke disaster, the Freke cutting affair, the irritation caused by Jack's personality and his want of social ambition, and, lastly, the anger caused by the affair of last night and the manner in which she had been trapped by circumstance, and not only trapped, but shown up in the trap—all

these had found expression in her speech, and the expression had given her relief.

She was not in the least sorry for it, as is the fashion with people to whom relief after an explosion of temper brings better counsel. Her score against Jack was much too long and lasting to be wiped off by an explosion like that. Had she never loved him it would have been different, but her love for him had given deep soil for the roots of her anger to grow in; she felt she was hitting herself all the time she was hitting him, and that to a woman brings that madness of action aroused by self-castigation which is one of the strangest phenomena of the soul.

Women have in this way whipped themselves into a nunnery or out of society, according to the bias of their nature and the spin it has given them to left or right—or rather to wrong or right.

She picked up the pocket-book lying on the floor and placed it on the dressing-table. Then she listened. Jack had gone into his room and shut the door. She sat on her bedside, scarcely thinking; waiting, listening, for his next move.

She waited like this for half an hour; then she heard him leave his room and go downstairs.

She opened her door cautiously, went down the little passage, opened his door and looked in.

His dress clothes were lying on a chair, folded. As a rule, he never folded his clothes, just cast them aside as a snake sloughs its skin, leaving them for the servant to put away. As a matter of fact, he had folded them in a fit of abstraction, urged by some vague idea of packing and going away.

She saw his brushes on the dressing-table, his crumpled dress-tie lying where he had cast it on the floor.

It was like looking at the things left behind him by a dead man. They gave her the first little shock of the new state of things into which she had entered. In ordinary life she would have joked him for the tidiness he had displayed in folding his clothes. She closed the door and went back to her own room more than ever determined to get through with the business in her mind, and away from all heart-hit-

ting things and things freighted with remembrance.

She would go her way, Jack his. It was impossible for them to live together any longer.

She began to pack her clothes. In the midst of this she stopped, went to the dressing-table, and examined the money in the pocket-book. She counted the notes and laughed. He had kept more than half their money. She was glad of the fact. There was money here in plenty to keep her till she got more; there would be more coming in from royalties on her book; she would write short stories, and she could easily get an advance on royalties for her next novel.

Julia was a woman with business instincts. These precious attributes had saved her from tangled contracts. "The Apple" had been published without any marriage contracts with the publisher tying Julia to him for better or worse; so, as a consequence of her success, she could demand of him five hundred pounds or more down on the nail of placing her signature to the next contract, and if he did not like it, she could get the money elsewhere.

She replaced the pocket-book on the table and went on with her packing. She had determined on going to Bordighera. It was only a little distance further on across the Italian frontier. She had always felt an affection for Bordighera, born partly of its beautiful name and partly from those few lines of wonderful description at the end of "Le Nabab." It was a small place and would doubtless be cheap.

As she was finishing her packing, she heard Jack's step outside. He had come up for his hat. She heard him go into his bedroom and then come out again and go downstairs.

She went on to the balcony, and presently she saw him coming out of the hotel and walking away down the street in the direction of Eze.

Then she came back to her room, and opening her writing-case, which she had not packed, wrote him a note:

"I am going away. My life of late has been unbearable. You have chosen the society of those people instead of mine, and the whole of this position is of your making. Our marriage was a mistake from the very first, your friends

have never been my friends, and I have always been miserable, though for your sake I have fought against my misery. In the train coming here I asked you to take me to England to some place where the people were clean and respectable. I did not ask much. Instead, you have chosen to mix yourself and to mix me with people worse even than your artist friends in Paris, and you have completed your work this morning by your conduct and the tone in which you spoke to me. I will write to you after awhile to the Paris address; you have enough money to go on with for some months, and if any request of mine is of avail, I would ask you to go back to Paris and divorce yourself from the people you have met here and the life you are living.

"JULIA."

She put this letter into an envelope, addressed it, and placed it on the writing-table.

Then she came downstairs and had breakfast. She told the landlady, who waited upon her, that she was going away for a few days to Mentone.

"And monsieur?" asked the woman.

"Monsieur will remain until my return. Have you a time-table of the trains?"

The landlady fetched it.

Julia was examining it when a shadow darkened the bright sunshine of the doorway, and Carslake entered.

Julia looked up.

"Good morning."

"Good morning," said Carslake; then he turned to the landlady, who had also greeted him. "No, thanks, I have breakfasted. I stayed the night with some friends at Monte Carlo. Are there any letters for me?"

"Why, yes, monsieur, there is a letter, but it has been taken up to your room. I will fetch it."

"Well," said Carslake, when the woman had gone out, "I hope it's all right?"

Julia rose from her chair. "Can you come out with me for a moment?" said she. "I cannot talk to you here. I will run up and fetch my hat. I have something to say to you."

She went upstairs, and Carslake took his seat at the table. The landlady brought him the letter, which bore the Italian postmark. He

opened it, glanced at its contents, and then put it in his pocket as Julia entered.

In the street they turned to the left in the direction that leads to the uphill road towards the golf-links. Julia did not speak till the houses were left behind them; then she said: "I met my husband after I left you; he had been down in Monte Carlo all night, and he was walking towards the hotel when I overtook him, so we both entered together."

"Good," said Carslake. "That looked all right to the hotel people. If there's anything I have a horror of it's these hotel folk, though the people at the 'France' are the best of their sort; still, even the best people talk."

"Wait," said Julia. "My husband had been out all night, that does not matter much, but he had been with those people, you know the ones I mean, and *he* knows how I hate them. That made me angry, very angry, but what happened then was worse. The landlady was in the *salle-à-manger* when we went in, and the first thing she did was to congratulate me on my return, saying they had been frightened

when I did not come back last night, and had sat up waiting for me."

"Had you told your husband of what happened?" asked Carslake quickly.

"No. He thought I had been sitting up waiting for him."

Carslake whistled. "By Jove!" said he. "What an unfortunate business—such a tangle out of nothing!"

"I went upstairs," continued Julia, "and he came after me; then we had a scene. I told him what had been in my mind a long time. I parted from him."

"Yes."

"That's all."

"You parted with him. How do you mean, precisely?"

"I am not going to meet him again—as a wife."

They had unconsciously taken the upward road that leads to the links, and they had nearly reached the spot from which yesterday they had watched the vision of Corsica. This morning the view of the sea was more beautiful than

the view of yesterday, for now the Mediterranean was sparkling in its morning splendour. A light wind waved the olives and palms in view, and the horizon lay stainless beyond the sea.

"You do not mean to meet him again?"

"No."

"This is serious," said Carslake.

"Yes, I suppose it is. We have to meet serious things in life and face them."

"That is true, but there are different ways of facing things."

"How do you mean?"

He took his seat on the low wall and she leaned against the wall beside him.

"I mean that we may face them and then act in two ways, wrongly or rightly."

"Do you think I have acted wrongly?"

"Is it for me to judge? Who am I to set up as an adjudicator. Yet I can give you my impressions, and they may be worth something, for I take a bird's-eye view of the situation; whereas you, of necessity, are close to the immediate position. The thing that strikes me—"

"Yes?"

"The thing that strikes me is this. When I met you first in Paris at that ball you cared very much for your husband."

"How did you know?"

"I am trained to use my eyes and my senses; they are my stock-in-trade. The way you looked at him, the way you spoke to him and spoke of him—everything told me. I noticed everything to the minutest detail."

"And why did you make such an especial study of us?"

"Because," said Carslake, "I believe I fell in love with you that night, just as I believe I am in love with you still."

Julia gasped.

This extraordinary man spoke just as he would have spoken of the scenery, or the dust of the road, or of the affairs of some other person.

"You lost that twopenny-halfpenny fan," said he. "Well, I have it. I stole it and put it into my overcoat pocket. Now you understand why I made such an especial study of you both. I met you again the other night in the

Casino; you still cared for your husband then. Now don't you interrupt me. I meet you this morning, and you have parted with your husband for ever. What is the cause of this tremendous change in you? Even if your husband had been unfaithful to you—and I am sure he had not, for I know the man—it would not be sufficient to account for it. I don't think there is any change in you. I think you have become obsessed with the *folie de mariage,* if I may coin the expression, which attacks many married people; the rage which comes from the friction set up by trifles between two people who are bound together in close intimacy. If I did not care for you very sincerely, I would not have said all I have just said. I love you very much, and I would pluck you from danger."

"Ah," said Julia, "you should not have told me that."

"What?"

"That you cared for me."

"I have told you it because I am sure of myself and I am sure of you. I am sure of myself because I have left impulse far behind me in my

youth and I see life with the clear sight given by bitter experience. I am sure of you because I know that you still love your husband."

"That I do not," said Julia.

"I know you better than you know yourself. You do not know yourself now at all. You are in reality two people, we all are, but in most of us the fission is not so clear. You left the people you loved in that place you told me of—Closeminster—for the man you loved; that was perfectly right, yet you have often regretted your act. If you were to leave the man you love—despite what you say—for some other man, your regret would be infinitely greater in time."

Julia gave a little sob: "You have spoken to me as no one has ever spoken to me before—you have no right."

"Stop!" said Carslake. "I have the right of the strong to protect the weak. Just as I would protect your life if you were in danger so I am trying to protect your future. God! when I think of my own restraint I am astonished, for I could make you fancy that you loved me

just as I love you, and ruin your peace for ever, as easily as I could take you and throw you over that cliff and dash you to pieces."

"Do it!" cried Julia bitterly; "I wish I were dead!"

"You have many years to live, and many happy years; you can see nothing now, you are blind. I have told you how much I cared for you because that fact gives me the right to protect you from yourself. If you had become suddenly and in reality blind and I saw you walking in a dangerous place I would risk everything to put your feet right, and now I risk making a fool of myself in your eyes for the same purpose. To tell a woman that you love her and then to give her grand-motherly advice is to raise the woman in her soul against you. I don't care in the least about that. Not a fig. My love for you is of the sort that requires no return and that's the only sort of love worth a damn."

Julia rested her head against the sleeve of his coat; she was sniffling, crying quietly and abjectly in the shelter of his protection.

He did not stop her or offer the least con-

solation, judging it best to leave nature alone. In this crisis of the life of the woman he loved he knew quite well that at a touch from him she would have come to him. And he knew quite well that what he had said to her would hold her aloof from herself and the danger of other men. His declaration of his love for her had been used as a shield for her protection, not a sword for her undoing. Far sighted and friendly, his eyes had scanned the future, keen and undimmed by his passion for her his instinct had divined her true nature and the destruction that lay before her were she to go on a wrong course. Julia was of the order of women who cling to purity as they cling to soap, not because they love soap or purity for their own sakes, but because they have a physical and moral objection to being dirty or in the slightest degree soiled. Julia, had she left her husband and gone off with another man, would, when she came to her senses, have been in the condition of a person condemned for evermore to wear dirty cuffs. Even were she to sin in secret the sense of taint would be there poisoning her life and making her unhappy. That,

leaving aside the law of God, is the law of sexual morality in a nut-shell. Am I going to be dirty or clean? That is the question the soul of woman must answer. No highfalutin talk about love and affinity will stifle that primitive question or wash the self-respect which has once been soiled. Then you will be happy or unhappy according to your nature and your tolerance of dirty linen. Julia would be unhappy.

After awhile she dried her eyes and drew away slightly from her companion.

"Well, it doesn't matter," said she; "whatever happens, I am going away. I can live no longer like this; it must come to an end. I am going now at once and I will never see you again."

"Never is a long day," said he. "I feel we shall meet again some time in the future."

"Never. I don't want to meet you again, after what you said—it's better not. Oh, dear, I wish I were dead!"

This was the dangerous moment. Carslake felt that if he were to relax the thousandth part of an inch the next moment he would be hold-

ing her in his arms and that would be fatal, for she would be holding him in hers.

"Come," said he, "be brave. Look at me standing here talking to you and every moment my liberty is at stake."

"Your liberty?"

"Just so; I am in imminent danger of the police. Don't be alarmed, I have committed no crime; all the same, five or ten years' imprisonment is hanging over me by a hair. I was warned in a letter this morning. Sounds like a thing one would read in a romance, doesn't it? and to put the full romantic touch a woman has given me away—a wretched creature who got a finger into my affairs and who, for the sake of money—or, rather, from viciousness because I would not continue to give her money—has given me away."

"But what have you done?" cried Julia, forgetting herself for a moment at this astonishing statement.

"Many things" replied he laughing; "some of the many things that men do every day in the secret service."

"You are in the secret service?"

"Of the Triple Alliance. I serve two Emperors and a King. Now you have my secret. And you may guess what would happen to me if I were examined just now, for in my pocket I have a bundle of papers with maps and photographs of Toulon that are simply treasures of art, not to say details about those forts up above there quite invaluable in their way."

"Destroy them," cried Julia, "or hide them."

Carslake laughed.

"That would be rather a weak sort of thing to do, wouldn't it? Oh, no, I will carry them safe to their destination."

"But what imprudence to stand here talking to me when you ought to be escaping."

"Not a bit. I am safer here than anywhere, for I have full command of the road so that I could see anyone coming for two miles away, and I have all that country up there to escape in. I know it, every inch, and I have, what is more, a friend in that country and a change of clothes. You understand, in this business money is no object and one moves like a chess pawn guarded by all sorts of other pawns, to say nothing of great pieces. What bothers me

is that I ought to return to Monte Carlo to warn one of our people of danger, and most likely I will."

"Return!"

"Oh, I will go disguised. Well, that is enough about me. You—where do you intend to go?"

"I am going to Bordighera."

"You are determined?"

"Quite. I am going to make my own life in future." Carslake smiled. All the time, ever since they had paused at the wall those hawk eyes of his had been sweeping at intervals the country below, there was still nothing to cause alarm.

"Well," he said, "if you are determined, do as you say. You will have time to think things over at Bordighera. Where do you intend to stay there?"

"I don't know."

"Go to the Hôtel Bella Vista, it is quite reasonable, and you will find English people there if that is any attraction—"

"Will you—will you let me know if you are all right?" said Julia; then with a little laugh:

"Unless you think friends a superfluity and a bother."

"I will let you know," said Carslake, too wary to be drawn into a discussion on the question of the superfluity of friends; "you shall know directly I am on safe territory. Good-bye."

He raised her hand as though he were about to kiss it; then he dropped it, turned, and walked off, taking the uphill road.

Julia watched him, waiting for him to look back. He did not look back once. Carslake never looked back once he had started to a goal.

She put her hand to her heart as though she felt a pain there. She was placing it on the spot from whence half her trouble and anger against Jack originated. Carslake had bound himself up with her life much more than she had imagined. The man exercised upon her the strangest fascination. He could have done anything he chose with her and she knew it, yet she was not conscious of being in love with him. In his presence life was fuller and brighter and all things of more interest; his mind had the

magical property of lending her mind some of its power and life. His declaration that he loved her had given her neither pleasure nor pain; there was a strange voiceless intimacy between them which made all spoken words of this sort only like the letter which follows the telegram to confirm it.

She had known all along that he cared for her as a woman; she did not return this feeling, just accepted it. The precious thing to her was —what? She could not tell. She only knew that she was heart-broken at his going, and horribly lonely.

She watched him till he was out of sight; not once did he look back. Then she turned and looked at the sea.

All that Carslake had said to her in favour of her husband had only succeeded in hardening her heart still more. Jack seemed now part of Carslake's going as well as part of all the other troubles, to get away from the chance of seeing or meeting this husband whom she told herself she hated was now the dominant ambition of the moment. Carslake, by just mentioning the Hôtel Bella Vista at Bordighera, had made it a

desirable place; it had become part of him at once—and he would write to her there.

She turned downhill and walked to the hotel, keeping a look-out for her husband; but he was nowhere to be seen. He had not returned to the hotel, and when she went upstairs she found her things just as she had left them, her dressing-bag and the small portmanteau standing only waiting to be closed and strapped and the letter to Jack still lying on the dressing-table.

The sight of these things gave her her first qualm, and she found herself asking of herself for the first time the question: "Are you really going away; are you really going to leave your husband, break from him and leave him here behind you?"

Had Jack appeared before her at that moment in a repentant mood she would no doubt have attacked him with wild words and a tempest of tears and all might have been well. But he had not returned. He evidently believed the worst of her. Not content with having "dragged her into the mud," he had now offered her the last insult a man can offer a woman.

Never again would she put it in his power to do this.

She rang the bell, ordered a conveyance to take her to the station, and, having sent for the landlady, informed her that she was starting.

She had taken the letter from the dressing-table, to leave it there would be an indication to the hotel people that a rupture had taken place between them. She would post it on the way to the station and he would receive it in the evening.

When the trap which she had ordered was at the door her luggage was put in and she departed. Jack would pay the bill; he had plenty of money, and to have paid it herself would have seemed strange after her declaration that she would only be absent a few days.

She stopped at the post office and posted her letter, and then drove on to the railway station.

She found that a train would start for Ventimiglia in half an hour, and she took her seat on one of the station benches to wait for it.

Disturbed as she was in mind, she took notice of the people on the platform, and even criticised the dresses of what women were there.

A woman's critical eye for dress remains active though most of her other organs be numbed, and Julia, absorbed in a new idea given to her by a coat and skirt of champagne-coloured box-cloth, did not notice a rather shabby-looking old lady who, coming along the platform and walking with the aid of a stick, had sat down on the bench beside her.

She did not notice her in fact till she began to speak.

"You are English, aren't you?" said the old lady.

"I beg your pardon," said Julia, turning; "yes, I am English."

"I thought so," said the other, grinding the point of her stick on the pavement and looking away down the platform as if in search of someone. She said no more, seemed to have dismissed Julia completely from her mind after having ascertained the fact of her nationality, but without a trace of rudeness; her mind seemed occupied with other things, and Julia, watching her with amusement, noticed that, though her general appearance leant towards shabbiness, the materials out of which she was

upholstered were of the best quality, and her malacca cane had a Dresden china head to it, though the glove on the hand that held it had seen good service.

"I'm looking for my man," suddenly broke out the old lady again. "I walked down from the hotel for the exercise and left him to bring on the luggage, and he ought to have been here before me, considering he drove."

"Are you going by this train to Ventimiglia?" asked Julia.

"Yes; are you?"

"Yes."

"You are travelling alone?"

"Oh, yes."

"Aren't you rather young to be doing that?"

"I'm twenty-five," said Julia, laughing.

"You don't look it," said the other; "you don't look more'n twenty. Times have changed in the last sixty years and girls do things now they wouldn't a' dreamed of when I was young. Do you know how old I am?"

"No."

"I'm eighty-one."

"Nonsense!"

"I'm eighty-one, and I can read without glasses, and only for a bad foot I could walk without a stick."

"Is that so?" replied Julia, her face and voice suddenly taking on an unwonted animation, for, advancing along the platform in her direction, and accompanied by several other people, her eyes, dilating on the sight, beheld Mr. and Mrs. Freke.

"Now," thought Julia, "they'll have to see me, and I won't lower my eyes an inch, but just stare that woman in the face if she looks at me. *I'll* show her."

"Without glasses!" she said. "I wouldn't have believed it possible; it's marvellous."

"Nonsense!" replied the other; "it's common-sense and plain living and open air and exercise."

"Just so," said Julia. The Frekes were approaching, and Mrs. Freke had seen her, those bright bird-like eyes that could see much better without the windowpane-tortoiseshell-rimmed glasses had taken in the girl chatting with the old woman on the seat, and the old woman chatting with the girl; and as Mrs. Freke passed

Julia, so far from cutting her, she turned, bowed, and smiled with the sweetest smile. The male Freke raised his hat. Then they passed on. Julia, electrified, had smiled and bowed in return. For all her hatred of "those snobs," she had smiled and bowed like a marionette in reply to their salutation.

"Who is that woman?" asked the old lady.

"That," said Julia, scarce knowing what she said, "that is Mrs. Freke; she lives near us in England."

"Don't know the name. I only asked because of her hat." Mrs. Freke was wearing what seemed a whole hen-pheasant on her head. It was a vogue of the moment, and, to do the unfortunate woman justice, she resented it whilst submitting to it.

"It's the new fashion," said Julia, who found herself accepting the antique at her side as though they had been lifelong acquaintances, Age and Oddity being such sufficient introductions.

"The new folly, you mean," replied the other. "Ah, there's my man, and here comes the train. Will you give me your arm to get into it, for I

can't manage these high continental carriages without help, and Wilkins, my maid, is no use."

"With pleasure," said Julia.

As she piloted her companion to the train, she caught a glimpse of Wilkins and a pile of luggage.

"Call that boy, will you, and get me a paper?" said the octogenarian, when she was safe at last in the carriage. "They are the English papers he's got, aren't they? Three sous." She opened her purse and counted the coins out and handed them to Julia, who handed the paper up and then got in herself.

The Antiquity looked for a moment surprised, as though someone had offered her a familiarity.

"Oh, you're going on," said she. "I'd forgot. I'm so used to a compartment to myself that it seems funny to travel with strangers."

"Indeed?" said Julia. "Don't let me inconvenience you, then, for there are several empty first-class compartments close to this one."

"No, you just sit where you are," replied the amiable one, quite ignoring the snub and the suggestion that she should get out herself. "I

wouldn't think of putting you to the trouble, and it's only to Ventimiglia." She opened the newspaper and began reading the contents as the train started.

Julia, looking at her, labelled her in her mind the Old Beast; she was quite sure this person had only struck up acquaintance with her so that she might have her assistance in getting into the train, and possibly in hunting for her man, should he not have turned up.

She looked out of the window, watching the scenery and trying to imagine what alchemy had wrought upon Mrs. Freke.

Was it an optical illusion?

No, those shining teeth and wrinkled eyes were genuine—at least, the eyes were. Old Mr. Freke was no spectre. She had seen them leaving the station as the train drew out; they had evidently come to see friends off. Had the smile and bow been the offspring of simple politeness they would have been understandable. Mrs. Freke might have repented of the cutting business, but they were to all appearances the children of Cordial Warmheartedness by Long Acquaintanceship. The smile and bow that are

given only to a dear friend. Heavens! what a mystery!

At Ventimiglia the Antique, who had been deeply immersed in the columns of her newspaper, folded it; her maid, coming to the carriage door, helped her to descend, and off she went without troubling in the least to say good-bye to Julia.

One only says good-bye or good-day to one's friends and acquaintances, amongst which one does not rank casual strangers picked up in railway trains.

But Julia had no time to trouble about matters like these. At Ventimiglia all luggage has to be examined by the customs, and for one frantic moment she fancied she had forgotten the keys. Then she found them, and having passed through the ordeal by rummage, entered the train for Bordighera.

Bordighera is the next station from Ventimiglia on the Italian side. A delightful little station, right by the sea-shore, with, on the one hand, the blue waves breaking on the grey pebbles of the beach, and on the other, the town, the red-tiled roofs, the palm-trees—all sweeping up

to the eminence where the Hôtel Angst and the Cap Hotel stand white amidst their gardens of orange and tree-fern and date-palm. The atmosphere of Bordighera is clean and summery and lazy. It is not on the same earth as Monte Carlo, though from the beach you can see the white houses of the City of Pleasure; La Turbie and the Tower of Augustus; Monaco and its palace; not to speak of a hundred miles of bay-broken coast stretching to the vague vision of the Estereles.

On the other hand, you have the bay across which lies Ospedeletti and the cape that shelters San Remo.

Inland you have the Alps. The Maritime Alps come right down to the sea—almost. Deep-throated valleys run inland, valleys sheltered from the winds, and giving shelter to olive groves, where the grass is blue-stained with violets; vineyards, orange-trees, farms primitive as in the days of Boccaccio and the Borgias.

Julia, having captured her luggage, started in a little carriage for the hotel. The place appealed to her from the very first; she felt as

though she had shut the door on a roomful of disreputable and clamouring people and stepped into a garden.

The main street through which they drove, parallel to the sea, had a touch of the south about it—the south that one finds beyond the Italian frontier, and which is first cousin to the East.

The flat-topped and coloured houses, the lights and shadows and smells, the people, the shops—all had an individuality of their own.

Leaving the main street, the carriage took an uphill road, and stopped at last before the Hôtel Bella Vista, one of the pleasantest hotels on the Riviera, with a commanding view of the sea, and an almost unrivalled view of the coast.

Julia entered, secured a room facing the sea, and then walked out to inspect the place at close quarters. Ever since leaving Monte Carlo an unaccustomed, half pleasurable, half painful feeling had accompanied her, mixing itself with everything and making even common things seem strange. It was the feeling of being alone for the first time in her life.

She had never been alone before; never be-

fore had she to think only for herself. At the Close she had been only a unit in a household that existed and progressed independently of her, and since then Jack had been her inseparable companion.

The pleasurable part of this new feeling was beginning to fade ever so slightly. It would have faded quicker, perhaps, only for the excitement of the journey and the companionship of the old lady in the train. What struck her now forcibly as she went down-hill towards the town was the fact that the whole day belonged to her alone, and the whole place to do as she liked in.

She was beginning to make her new life with a vengeance, and she had ample material for the work and opportunity! too much, it seemed to her, who had worked up to this surrounded by trammels and distracting calls.

She walked along the main street of the town, looking into the shop windows and trying to take an interest in the things exposed for sale. She was a fervent student of shop windows as a rule, not a mere window-gazer! gaining hints about hats and trimmings and gowns which she

put to practical use with the aid of her own needle; but to-day these things seemed to have lost interest. The crystallised fruit exposed in Berger's window had the same attraction for her as the hats and Paris fashions exposed in the windows near by. She walked on and presently by a side street reached the sea front, and sat down to look at the waves breaking on the beach.

She wondered what Jack was doing and what he would say and think when he found her gone. She did not regret her action in the least; that suspicion of his, those words, and the manner in which they had been spoken, were poisonous to regret. They were now the real head and front of his offending, though, goodness knows, there was body and tail enough behind them. All the same, as she sat in her loneliness, she could not but wish that things had been different.

"Anyhow," said she all of a sudden, and as if voicing the last words of some subliminal discussion, "he has money enough to go back to Paris, and those theatrical people will look after him."

The words spoken to herself had no special

reference to the train of thought that had been running in her mind. She was almost surprised at them.

She and Jack had done with each other; why on earth should she bother about him? Habit, no doubt.

She turned her mind towards Carslake. Was it really this morning that she and Carslake had talked together? It seemed months ago, a great division of time seemed to separate her from him; more, he seemed to have an unreality, as though he were a person she had met in a dream, or read about in a book, or seen acting upon the boards in some play whose plot she had half forgotten. Had she been still in La Turbie, Carslake would have been vividly alive to her, for the whole place was saturated with his personality. Here, where nothing spoke of him, he failed to be real. She recalled his words—the words in which he had told her of his affection for her. She remembered the extraordinary sensation they had given rise to in her mind. She felt none of that now; they seemed like the words of a phantom. La Turbie, Monte Carlo, the golf course—all that

seemed phantom land, and the tremendous fact was slowly borne in on her that the only real thing in all that phantasmagoria was Jack.

He was alive and kicking still, hate him as she might. She found herself thinking of his undarned socks; those socks jumped up in her mind and were very much more vivid than Carslake's personality to her now; the very fact that they were able to exasperate her showed their power.

It seemed to her for a moment as if Jack and his belongings had become in some unaccountable way part of herself—like an aching tooth that she had fancied she had pulled out in a dream, but which still remained to trouble her.

She got up and walked along the little promenade, past the kursaal, to the rocks that jut out into the sea just here.

On the other side of these rocks lies the fishermen's beach. They were hauling in a seine net, and Julia watched them with interest; this honest bit of labour was the best thing she had seen on the Riviera, that paradise of parasites on society. She remembered her longing for a cottage amongst humble and cleanly folk, as she

had expressed it to Jack in the train, and his strictures on the fishermen of Newlyn, or was it New Quay? The feeling came to her now with renewed force, and, crossing the rocks to the beach, she walked to where the men were at work.

The great net was nearly in, the men hauling steadily and the womenfolk and little children waiting to see the catch. How contented and happy and brown and healthy these people seemed, people without social ambitions and bothers, and amongst whom such a complex and horrid little tragedy as hers never could have been enacted.

She was contemplating the oldest work of the world and the oldest workers, work that had been going on when Jesus of Nazareth walked by the sea of Galilee, and for ages before that, and, like all things great and eternal, the work of the fishermen had a tale and a moral for the gazer.

She could not have told you in words what it said to her, yet what it said to her seemed to cast discredit on her ambitions and the trivialities and futilities of her life and her work.

Now the net was in. How small the pocket filled with struggling fish seemed, and how small the fish themselves! Yet everyone seemed satisfied.

CHAPTER XIV

THE ADVENTURES OF JULIA (*continued*)

JULIA looked at her watch.

It was nearly five o'clock, and she returned to the hotel for afternoon tea.

The manageress had told her that afternoon tea would be served in the drawing-room for anyone desiring it. There was only one person in the room when she entered, a youngish-looking woman, evidently English, and to judge by her masculine style of dress, advanced.

She was having tea, and Julia, joining her in the meal, got into conversation with her.

Miss Hetherington—for that was this individual's name—did not require much introduction; she talked like a man and laughed like a man, and crossed her legs like a man; understand me, her voice was not gruff, nor her laugh coarse; but there was a curious directness and decision in both alien to womanliness, and her gaze was just the same, direct and level and decided. Her skin, as much as one could see

of it, had the weather-worn look of an out-of-doors woman.

She was, in fact, a hunting woman, a shooting woman and a fishing woman; well born, moving in good society, but with rather limited means, all of which Julia gathered in her first ten minutes acquaintance with her. It was Julia's first acquaintance with the masculine type, and it interested her so much that she almost forgot her other preoccupations.

Miss Hetherington seemed to know everyone worth knowing, from the Prime Minister downwards—or, according to Miss Hetherington, upwards—and she was quite frank in her avowal of her own financial limitations and in her damnation of death duties, the Radical Government, and all the other rats that nibbled at her cheese.

After tea she produced a substantial hammered-silver cigarette-case that had seen good service, and Julia accepted a cigarette.

"They don't mind you smoking here after tea," said Miss Hetherington, "so long as you don't smoke cigars. I'm not much of a smoker myself; I just smoke a cigarette because it's

something to do; but it would be no deprivation to me to stop it. There are only two classes of women smokers: people who either smoke as a something to do or to be in the fashion, and people who smoke for the sake of the drug. It's playing ruination with women, that and morphia and drink. Look at Marjorie Stansford."

The case of Lady Marjorie Stansford, as given by Miss Hetherington, made Julia gulp; but this was only the opening of the floodgates. Miss Hetherington was on her favourite subject.

She passed from woman to woman, quoting well-known and, to Julia, honoured names, and the things she said and the things she told quite calmly and as a matter of every-day occurrence were to Julia past belief, and some of them beyond understanding.

When the other left off she felt as though she had been looking into a horrible pit. Bohemia held nothing like this, if it were true, and true she had to believe it, for the woman who was talking to her brought conviction by her very manner of speaking, and by the fact that she

spoke of these things without being shocked—quite as every-day occurrences.

"Well," said the garbage-lover, when she had finished, "I must be moving. I'm going down to the post-office to register a letter. Will you walk with me?"

On the way to the post-office Julia, stopping at a book-shop to get something to read, saw a cheap edition of Loti's "Romance of a Spahi." She remembered that Fatou Gaye had been named after the heroine, and she bought the book. As they were leaving the shop, a barouche and pair passing drew her attention. In the carriage, sitting bolt upright, was the old lady whom she had met that morning at Monte Carlo station.

"Look," said Julia to her companion. "Can you tell me who that is?"

"That!" said the other, glancing after the barouche. "It's the Duchess of Kent."

"The Duchess of Kent?"

"Yes. Haven't you ever seen her before?"

Julia laughed. In a flash she knew now the secret of Mrs. Freke's bow and that charming smile. Not for Julia was it meant, nor for Her

Grace. No; she had bowed because it had pleased her to be seen bowing to a person who was talking to the Duchess of Kent.

"Yes, I have seen her before. I travelled in the same carriage with her to Ventimiglia, and I bought her a newspaper."

"Did she pay you for it?"

"I believe so. Why?"

"Oh, it's one of her little ways to forget trifles of that sort."

"Is she mean?"

"Mad mean, but sane in every other way."

Poor Julia! it seemed to her that here in this corner of the earth, where the seas were the bluest in the world, the flowers the brightest and the scenery the most beautiful, that here she had been led by Fate to see Society and Bohemianism face to face, each crying to her: "Which is the uglier of us two—you who belong to neither of us, we call on you to judge!"

She dined that night at the table-d'hôte, going almost immediately after dinner to her room. Having retired to bed, she took up the "Romance of a Spahi" and began to read it.

The picture of the handsome Spahi on the

cover reminded her somewhat of Jack, and she had not been reading long before she came on the heroine, Fatou Gaye.

Fatou Gaye was a negress, as readers of the book will remember, and the terrible hold of this woman on the Spahi in the dismal heat-laden Senegal country, so ably depicted by Loti, seized on the mind of Julia, making her read on and on, skipping, but always holding to the thread of the story, till the last mournful scene was reached.

She flung the book on the floor and lay gazing at the electric light till it dazzled her and made her fling her hand backwards across her eyes. She tried to think of Mrs. Freke, of the Duchess of Kent, of the women whose doings had been so ably expounded by Miss Hethering-ton.

They all evaded her, slipping this way and that way from before her eyes, and giving place to the picture of Jack. She did not want to think of him, she told herself; he was obnoxious to her, and yet his picture came before her and his voice recalled itself, and she might drive picture and voice away as much as she would,

they were still there, waiting for the first opportunity to come back.

Julia was discovering what many another woman has discovered and is discovering at the present moment, that love may wither to the commonplace and affection become strained to breaking-point without destroying in the least that tie which grows from close intimacy, which is born from a thousand infinitesimal sources, and which makes one being become, in some extraordinary way known only to God, the necessity of another being.

She had been accustomed to brush Jack's coat, to take his pipe away when he smoked too much and give it back when he reached for the cigarettes; from all sorts of little sources like these, quite overlooked by your pompous and philosophic author who writes on Marriage, threads of asbestos and fine steel had spun themselves around her being. Jack, without her knowing it, had become a necessity to her. He had so long stimulated certain cells in her brain and irritated them by his vagaries, his personality, and all sorts of little antagonisms to her own nature that, the stimulus and irrita-

tion withdrawn, the cells were beginning to cry out. And they are very important cells, these, being closely allied to those of Affection and Sex.

Jack was like some mild vice in which she had long indulged, some stimulant against which she had often cried out after an over-dose. Cut off from it now, she was beginning to feel the effects.

She put out the electric light and soon fell asleep. I have said before that Julia, whatever her troubles might be, had one compensation—she could always sleep.

But she could not control her dreams, and in her dreams she was hunting for Jack with a darning-needle to darn his socks; and now she was discovering him dressed like a Spahi, and holding in his arms a nude savage girl, with nostrils painted after the fashion of that civilised savage, Fatou Gaye.

CHAPTER XV

THE ADVENTURES OF CARSLAKE

When Carslake left Julia he did not look back. Only when he reached the grassy ground at the beginning of the golf-course did he pause. He took off his hat, wiped his brow, and laughed.

There was very little mirth in that laugh, directed mainly against himself. He could not have told you in the least the reason of Julia's hold upon him, or why, at their very first meeting in Paris, she had attracted him more than any other woman he had met in the last twenty years. The fact remained that in the last few days she had passed from being a woman who simply attracted him and had become much more.

And he could have had her for the asking ten minutes ago.

Who was Jack Revell that he, Carslake, should bother his head about him?

Carslake asked himself this question as though his attitude towards Julia had been

taken for the sake of the man, not for his love for the woman. He scarcely admitted the extent of this love to himself, nor did he fully know its nobility and its power for good.

The supreme selfishness which is the cardinal fact of animal passion, the selfishness which recks nothing of the ruin that follows in the train of seduction and adultery, was there faithfully attendant upon Passion; but the supreme abnegation of real love was there as well, and linked to an iron will and a knowledge of the world and the people in the world almost unique.

Carslake was no common man; born of an English father and an Austrian mother, he had started life as a business man; failed, owing to the stupidity of a partner; re-started for himself; succeeded, and, sick of business success, closed out with some thirty thousand pounds to the good. He invested this sum and lived on the income—for a few months. He could not be idle; sport could not fill his life as it does the lives of some men; literature was too steady and sedentary an occupation for his roving spirit; and attracted by a suggestion of his

cousin, who was occupying a post in the Vienna Foreign Office, Carslake, after an interview with the Ball Platz, passed into the secret service of Austria.

Though he had been born in England, spoke English like a native, and liked the people well enough, he was more Austrian than English. The mother predominated in him, as it does in most clever men. Despite his virility of appearance, he had a distinctly feminine streak in his nature—that saving streak without which a man is little more than the original Baboon.

In his compact with the Austrian Government, however, there was a saving clause placing England out of the sphere of his activities, so that he worked free of conscience, as now.

A rapid thinker, as he needed to be in a life that was one perpetual escape from danger, he had made his plans almost on reading the warning letter. It was essential that he should place the frontier between himself and the French authorities with the least possible delay; the railway was barred to him, the road was barred to him; there was only one way—the hills and the mountain tracks. He knew these well. He

knew, also, the difficulties of the way. None knew better than he the perpetually open eyes that guard a frontier.

As he skirted the hill guarded by the fort, he caught sight of the club-house and the workmen busy about it. He laughed and turned towards it. Though it would delay the plans he had formed, he could not for the life of him resist the impulse that suddenly seized him to glance again at the scene of last night's adventure.

The workmen, seeing the well-dressed stranger casually approaching them, greeted him respectfully when he gave them good-day, and were ready enough to answer his questions.

Carslake approached the door of the unfinished room where he had passed the night.

"Ah!" said he, "I see you have had a fire here?"

The chief *ouvrier,* who was accompanying him, almost exploded.

A fire—yes, indeed, a bonfire, no less, lit by gypsies the night before, or tramps. A nice thing, truly, that honest workmen are unable to leave their tools and material for a few hours

unprotected. Would Monsieur believe it, these wretches had not only had the audacity to come and camp in the club-house, but they had used the window-frames for firewood!

Carslake laughed.

"Never!"

"Yes, it is true. See, you can see the fragments amidst the cinders."

Carslake entered the room and glanced about him. It seemed a long time since his waking there that morning. He saw the whole situation again. The early morning sunlight on the walls, Julia rising up and stretching herself, the expression on her face, and his own inclination to laugh at the queerness of the whole business. Heavens! what furniture and tapestry this empty, roofless, floorless room possessed quite unperceived by the chief *ouvrier,* who was now poking the embers of the fire with his boot-toe to exhibit more fully the fragments of the window-frames broken up by those scamps, the gypsies.

Carslake saw a hairpin on the ground. Julia had dropped it. He picked it up unperceived by the other and put it in his pocket; then he

said good-day, and having tipped the man, departed.

He took care to go in the opposite direction to that which he intended following. Having put a mile between himself and the club-house, and being now hidden from it by a rise in the ground, he altered his course, making east instead of west.

Half an hour later he was in the midst of scenery so wild and so remote from the idea of civilisation that a wanderer finding himself there never could have imagined Monte Carlo lying just beyond those hills, or the sea beyond Monte Carlo.

To the north and west the snows of the Alps showed spar-white against the blue sky; there was heather here like the heather on the hills of Scotland, and there was the silence that belongs to the natural home of heather, and the loneliness that belongs to the silence.

Carslake breathed in the pure, clear mountain air with a sensation of relief; he had put everything now from his mind but the immediate objects in view, and the first of these lay before him in the form of a small hut perched

on the hillside a quarter of a mile away and a little to the south of his path. As he drew near, the place showed itself up more clearly, a mere hovel with tiny, unglazed windows and a door so low that an ordinary-sized man would have to bend before he entered.

A few yards away from this place Carslake paused and glanced around him over the country, as if looking for something or someone. He soon found what he sought—the figure of a man away on the hillside to the right. The man was tending a flock of goats. Carslake could see the goats browsing and straying hither and thither, whilst the man, leaning on his staff, stood absolutely motionless, as if sleep had stricken him, or that mesmerism of the hills which falls on one like an enchantment calling the spirit away to wander in unknown fields.

Carslake possessed something of the power of Vanamee; standing by the wretched hovel and gazing across the warm afternoon light, he fixed his gaze on the man in the distance.

Presently the man moved, turned, saw the figure that had been silently hailing him, and flung up an arm. Then he came running.

He was a typical goatherd—young, scarcely out of his teens, good-looking and most evidently Italian.

All this land from Ventimiglia to Nice once belonged to Italy. It was ceded to France on the condition that it was to be returned to Italy after the lapse of thirty years. That treaty was signed much more than thirty years ago, and France, after the faithless manner of Nations dealing with Nations, has never redeemed her promise.

Italy has never forgotten that betrayal; it dwells in the mind of the people as well as in the mind of the Government.

The common people of Italian birth feel that the land they are walking on is theirs by right, and taken from Italy by wrong. This goatherd, who was in the pay of Carslake, was doubly tied to his service, and would, if need had arisen, have laid down his life to aid the man who was serving Italy and spying upon France.

"Umberto," said Carslake, "I have been betrayed; a woman has spoiled my plans, and I

must get over the frontier as quickly as may be. But I have need of you."

"I am at your excellency's service," replied the man. "You have but to speak and I obey."

"Yes, I know your fidelity and I have proved it, and it shall be reported to headquarters. Now I have need of you for two matters. First, you must go at once, leaving your goats to look after themselves and take your way down to Monte Carlo. You will find the Rue de Courcelles, which opens off the road leading to La Condamine, and at Number Ten you will ask for Monsieur Beaupré; should the servant say that he is out you must wait for his return."

"Yes, your excellency."

"You must see him privately."

"Yes, your excellency."

"He will ask you what you want, and you must say you come from me and that I have sent him a message."

"And the message?"

"Is one word, 'Leipsig.' He will understand what it means."

"I will do so."

"Now to the other matter, which is very simple. I am going to write a letter which you must post at the general post office; you must post it on your way to M. Beaupré's. I am about to write it now."

Carslake took his seat on a stone block by the door of the hut, produced a pocket-book and stylograph pen, and taking a letter-card from the pocket-book, wrote:

"Your wife is staying at the Hôtel Bella Vista, Bordighera."

He gummed the card, stamped it, and then wrote the address:

"M. J. Revell,
"Hôtel de France,
La Turbie."

He sat with the letter in his hand for a moment; he seemed to be weighing it and its contents. There was no necessity at all for him to let Revell know where his wife was staying. As a matter of fact, he was not bothering his mind about the man. He was thinking of Julia. He knew quite well that Julia would not be the

first to make overtures of peace, and he knew Jack Revell sufficiently to guess that, knowing his wife's address, he would not rest till he had seen her or written to her.

If the result failed to reconcile them, then it was not Carslake's fault. He would do his best for the woman he loved and leave the upshot to fate. Should they drift definitely asunder, then—ah, then things would be different. He caught himself almost hoping that the drift asunder would take place; it was the first failing of his higher nature before his lower, this faint hope; he tried to dispel it, and failing, turned his thoughts away in another direction.

He sprang to his feet, gave Umberto the letter, and then held out his hand.

The goatherd, surprised and half-abashed for a second, hesitated. Then the hands gripped, and Carslake, wheeling, strode off, making eastwards, whilst the man, placing the letter in the pocket of his coat, turned westward in the direction of La Turbie.

The day was warm, despite the time of year; the high Alps, far and white against the blue, gazed across the sunlit hills and valleys towards

the ocean they could not see, and as Carslake walked he could hear the dreamiest sound on earth—the distant clink, clank of a cow-bell.

As she of the clover and lush meadow fed with difficulty somewhere up in one of the little ravines, the bell beat time to her leisurely movements, and the sound pursued the man, mixing with his thoughts and leading them far away.

But far as they might travel, they always returned to one point: the letter which he had dispatched to Revell. Some trouble that had been steadily growing in his mind had suddenly seized this letter as a centre to grow from.

Then, all at once as he walked, the trouble took voice, a harsh, disagreeable voice saying to him, "You fool, what did you want playing another man's game like that? Why didn't you let them fight it out for themselves? You were thinking of *her* good! How do you know it is good for her to be tied to that shiftless Bohemian? Anyhow, you did more than enough this morning when you grandmothered her instead of taking her in your arms and kissing her as any other man in your position would have done—and as she expected. What do you

say? She didn't? Why, she was resting her head against your coat-sleeve—and you gave her good advice. No woman can ever forgive a man for a thing like that. Can't you see that the greatest compliment a man can pay a woman is to lose his head over her, even if he ruins her in doing so. You told her you loved her, that is the worst part of it; you thought yourself strong; you were—strong in your self-conceit and your weakness in passion. That's the point, and that's why she is unconsciously sneering at you now. A young man would have had the boldness and daring that you lacked and the disregard for consequence that belongs to youth; and in her heart of hearts she knows it."

A voice like this is a fine companion to make you forget distance and tiredness, and it carried Carslake long miles across hills and rocks and valleys, till at four in the afternoon he paused to rest somewhere in the country behind Mentone.

He knew the valley where he was, and that less than an hour's walk would bring him to the town by the sea. He determined on a bold

move, no less than to enter Mentone and finish his journey by train. There was little chance that the authorities at La Turbie would think of having Mentone station watched. They would scarcely dream of him making the journey across the hills, and they would give all their attention to the road and the railway where both were accessible from La Turbie. It was risky, but less so than attempting to cross the frontier on foot, and time was valuable. He rose up and made for the town, which he entered some forty minutes later.

He passed through it, making for the railway station, where he found that the next train for Ventimiglia was not due for an hour.

There was no one on the platform, and he took his seat, lit a pipe and began to smoke.

He had eaten nothing since breakfast and he had walked many miles, yet he did not feel hungry or tired. He sat trying to figure out in his mind the probable moves of his enemies. They would certainly search his room at the hotel at La Turbie, and as certainly be rewarded by finding nothing. Then the thought occurred to him that Jack Revell would most

certainly hear of his flight, and almost as certainly believe that he had run off with Julia.

He laughed to himself at the thought. He was tapping the ashes from his pipe and preparing to fill it again when his attention was attracted by a man who had come on to the platform.

This person, stout, black-bearded, and dressed in a frock-coat and tall hat, had the appearance of a prosperous chef. He was smoking a cigar, and he stood on the edge of the platform looking down at the metals for a moment and seemingly engaged in thought. Then he came along the platform, walking in a leisurely manner and seemingly quite oblivious of the presence of Carslake.

Now, Carslake, the moment this person had made his appearance, noticed that he swept the platform with his eyes as if in search of someone. He did not like his appearance in the least, yet he went on filling his pipe quite calmly and lit it, whilst the stranger, having passed him, took his stand a few yards away, and stood, smoking and seemingly engaged in a thoughtful

survey of an advertisement on the opposite platform.

Then, as if tired with standing, he came and took his seat on the bench beside Carslake.

"Does monsieur know what time the next train for Ventimiglia starts?" asked he.

"In about forty minutes," replied Carslake, looking at his watch.

"Ah, I thought there was a train sooner than that. Well, it can't be helped. I am going to San Remo; does monsieur know San Remo?"

"Slightly," replied Carslake, liking the other less and less with every word he spoke, and with suspicion strengthening in his mind.

"It is less dull than Mentone," went on the stranger; "and the Casino is better conducted than any on the coast with the exception of that at Monte Carlo. Does monsieur play?"

"Yes, I play a little."

"At Monte Carlo?"

"Yes."

"You come from Monte Carlo?"

"No, I live in Mentone."

"Ah, indeed. I have never met monsieur here."

"That is very likely. I expect there are a good many people here whom you have never met; Mentone is a big place, monsieur."

"Oh, as for that," replied the other, "Mentone is a very small place for me, monsieur. I am Chief of the Police, and so I know everyone."

"Ah, indeed," said Carslake, feeling as a rat might feel alone in a room with a great fat black cat. The stranger was, in fact, not unlike a cat in manner, movement and appearance. Carslake felt that he was being played with, and that at any moment the velvety paw might sharpen with claws of steel.

"Yes, indeed," replied the other, "and it would surprise you how much life we see here, despite the fact that Mentone is supposed to be the home for consumptives. The Riviera attracts many people, monsieur, besides consumptives."

"So I should imagine; you have gamblers enough."

"Oh, yes; and people of all sorts, so that one is constantly employed. At what hotel is monsieur staying?"

"Ah," said Carslake, laughing, "you may be sure of one thing monsieur—at whatever hotel I am staying I have paid my bill."

"Without doubt," replied the representative of the law, also laughing; "still, one has one's duty to perform, and the duty of the Chief of Police is to be for ever poking his nose into other people's affairs."

Carslake rose to his feet, as did the other.

"Monsieur," said he, "for whom do you take me."

"For a gentleman very much wanted on the Riviera," replied the Chief, raising his voice.

It was evidently a signal, for, scarcely had the words left his mouth than three men in uniform appeared on the platform, as if from nowhere.

The Chief stretched out his hand, but before he could place it on the arm of his quarry, Carslake, turning, jumped from the platform on to the metals, sprang from the metals on to the opposite platform, and, followed by the whole police pack, just as a fox is followed by hounds, made from the station, knocking over several men who would have stopped him. He made in the direction of least resistance; he could not

have told you afterwards, even with a plan of the station before him, the exact way he took. He only knew that he was headed off by obstacles, human and other, and that he crossed the metals again and was within an ace of being run down by a goods train. The goods train must have acted as an obstacle to the others, and, as a matter of fact, it did, for the driver, losing his head at having so nearly run over a man, pulled up sharp, and the police found themselves separated from the man they were following by a line of cattle-trucks, luggage-vans and horse-boxes.

Having crossed the metals, Carslake had a vision of a gate where a man tried to stop him, and then he found himself running down a narrow alley unpursued.

Half-way down this alley, which was evidently a pathway between two gardens, for over the wall on either side tree-tops showed against the sky, Carslake stopped, glanced behind him, recognised that he had out-distanced his pursuers, and taking his handkerchief from his pocket, wiped his brow; then at a quick walk he finished the distance, and found himself in a

quiet and fashionable street set on either side with shops, and half deserted at this the quietest hour in the day.

As he entered this street he heard a shout from the alley-way. The hounds were giving tongue; in a moment they would be in the street, and in a moment he would be lost.

A big confectioner's shop lay a few yards from him, and without a moment's hesitation he turned to it, opened the door and entered, closing the door behind him.

He found himself in a large room, where, seated about at marble-topped tables, a number of people were having afternoon tea. A counter crammed with confectionery and crystallised fruit lay on the left; smart waitresses dressed in the English style were serving the guests, and the big clock facing the counter pointed to ten minutes past five.

CHAPTER XVI

THE ADVENTURES OF CARSLAKE *(continued)*

EVERYTHING was English with the exception of the cakes and crystallised fruit and the faces of the waitresses; all the representative elements of the English colony were here, from the consumptive parson to the splay-footed hockey girl, from the maiden lady who travels by herself to the complete family.

It might have been The Mikado at Southsea, or Matthew's at Cambridge, and no one noticed the calm and self-possessed-looking man who opened the door and strolled to a vacant table, hanging his hat up as he went.

Even as he was in the act of so doing he heard the pursuit in the street. The hounds naturally imagined the hare still running; the idea that he had entered the quiet tea-shop never entered their stupid heads, and the shrill, incisive and vigorous French voices, debating for a moment as to the right or left, suddenly died away, ceased, and Carslake, turning to the

waitress at his elbow, ordered tea and tea-cakes. He could have laughed at the position had he been in the humour for laughing. It was sufficiently fantastic. He knew that the road to Ventimiglia was now absolutely blocked; even were he to wait till night he could never do the journey on foot, and it would be impossible to stay more than an hour at the outside in the place where he was. He would have to go into the street, and what would he do with himself then? As he drank his tea he sought diligently in his mind for some method or idea of escape. He had been in many tight corners before this, and had saved himself from impossible situations by his own coolness and quickness of resource; but he had never been in a position like this. It was stalemate with a vengeance; without being actually touched, he could move in no direction, and the diabolical part of the business lay in the fact that he had to move. If this place had only been an hotel, delay of even a couple of hours might have been possible. If it had been a cabaret, drinking would have formed a pretext for dalliance; but a tea-shop offers no excuse for loitering.

The idea of telephoning for a motor-car occurred to him and was dismissed; the police would no doubt have blocked all the garages, and even if he could have got one, there remained the road out of Mentone, which was no doubt watched, and the frontier end of the road, which had no doubt been notified.

He ordered more tea and more tea-cakes, urged by hunger and the instinct for delay, and was in the middle of the second lot, when an absolutely brilliant idea occurred to him.

Why not go by rail? Go right back to the station and boldly board the train just at the moment of its starting. No one would ever dream that a pursued man would return to the very place most seemingly dangerous to him; they would be searching for him everywhere but at the station. None of the station people had noticed him, for the place had been deserted practically when he was there. No doubt they had seen him pursued, but he knew quite well the fallibility of human judgment. They would not be looking for him at the station, and it would seem an absurd and impossible thing that he should calmly walk into it.

Of course the scheme was absolutely desperate, but it was just the desperation of it that gave him confidence.

He looked at his watch. It pointed to half-past five. The train was due to start in ten minutes. He would give himself four minutes to walk to the station.

He finished his tea, paid his bill, and then sat looking at some papers which he took from his pocket. Heavens! how slowly the time went! He could not have believed that a minute could drag itself out into such an eternity. Thirty-four minutes past five, thirty-five, thirty-five and a half. He rose, lit a cigarette, and left the shop.

The street seemed empty of danger; a nursemaid and a child were passing along; the child was holding a toy balloon by a string; the balloon was red, and the sunlight struck through it, giving it a luminous appearance, and the thing burned its image on Carslake's mind indelibly and never to be removed; a cab was crawling along on the opposite side of the way, and a stout Frenchman in shepherd's-plaid trousers, frock-coat, straw hat, and puce-col-

oured necktie, was preparing to cross the road. He had two white poodles with him, and the dogs had bows of ribbon to match the scarf of their owner.

Every detail of the street photographed itself on the mind of Carslake in the moment that it took him to pass from the tea-shop door to the entrance of the alley-way.

He came down the alley, passed along the street leading to the station entrance, walked boldly in, with his hat tilted on the back of his head and the cigarette between his lips, and took his ticket for Ventimiglia.

Fortunately for him there was a crowd; half a dozen English and American families with luggage to match were *en route* for Genoa. He hung amidst them, not daring to go yet on the platform. He saw a tall and pretty American girl embracing a thin and angular American woman, and heard her say: "Well, I'll see you next year, sure; same old place." He wondered where the old place might be, listening passionately all the time for the sound of the now overdue train.

Ah, here it came at last. He moved out to

the crowded platform, and there amidst the crowd, profile to Carslake, was the chief of the police.

CHAPTER XVII

THE ADVENTURES OF JACK

THAT morning the unfortunate Jack reached the Musée Océanographique at Monaco with little enough taste for the wonders of the deep sea; the exhilarating effects of the whiskies-and-sodas consumed at the Café de Paris had worn off him, and was not to be replaced by the stuffed and eyeless fish, the marine growths and crabs dredged up by His Highness of Monaco from the depths of the sea.

The wonderful museum left him unmoved, and having spent half an hour there, he took his departure and journeyed back to Monte Carlo.

Here he found himself at a loss what to do. Unconsciously he had been fighting out the question of Julia in his mind. Starting with revolt against her, he had been slowly coming round to her ever since the woman of the café had hinted that Carslake was an adventurer, possibly being watched by the police. That

she had been guilty of some indiscretion he felt certain, but in his heart of hearts he was also certain that she had not wronged him.

Impulse urged him to go back to La Turbie and make things up with her. Two things held him back, the remembrance of her speech, and the fact that he would have to account to her for the money he had lost. Torn between the impulse to go and the reluctance, he compromised by having luncheon.

When the meal was over he felt drowsy and disinclined for anything. He left the café, undecided as to what he should do, and found himself at the end of five minutes taking the road to La Turbie. It was as good to go there as anywhere else, and he need not see Julia. He would lie down on his bed and have a rest and think things over; of course, if she heard or saw him coming and wished to see him, it was her own affair.

The walk cleared his head and the clean, bracing air of the heights renewed his energy.

There was no one in front of the hotel when he came up to it, and no one on the balcony. Julia would be in her room, no doubt. He

passed through the *salle-à-manger*, whose only occupant was a dog asleep on a chair, went up the stairs, and paused in the little passage off which the bedroom door opened.

Both doors were closed.

He looked at the door of Julia's room, as if undecided as to whether he should knock or not; then he turned to his own door, opened it, and went into his room.

He closed his door, making quite a needless amount of noise in the process, glanced round the place, and then, casting his hat on a chair, flung himself on the bed. He was tired, but the bed did not bring him repose; the recumbent position increased the activity of his imagination. It seemed to him that some curse had fallen on them since leaving Paris for Monte Carlo. They had been happy enough in Paris; if you had told him in Paris that he and Julia would ever quarrel seriously, he would have laughed at you. The thing had begun in the train, and the Bachellrys had been the genesis of the whole affair. They and some evil influence which seemed to rise out of the corrupt soul of Monte Carlo. All at once, as he lay

there, he felt a hatred for Monte Carlo and its crowd rise up in his mind, and an equally vivid desire for some place clean and simple. He remembered Julia's longing for a cottage in some quiet English village. He could understand it now and sympathise with it. He would take her to England; he would pot-boil to pay for the money he had lost—do anything to get back into the old original happy position.

He rose up from the bed, opened his door impulsively, crossed the passage, and knocked at the door of Julia's room; then he opened the door.

"I say, Julia, for goodness' sake let's—"

He stopped; the room was empty. Not only was his wife not there, but her luggage was gone.

A cold hand seemed laid upon his heart. Where on earth had she gone to? What on earth had possessed her? Without a word, a warning, or a line, she had taken herself off like this—where?

He sat down on the bed to collect his thoughts.

There was something horrible and sinister in

the whole business. Horrible and sinister, for it seemed to him that the being he knew and understood and loved had turned all at once into something evil and hateful and full of hatred to him. He could not imagine in the least the complex and subtle circumstances that had brought this thing about. The long accumulations of irritation, the sense of failure in life, the feeling that he was the cause of her humiliation, and the last crowning business of the night before.

He could imagine nothing, he could only feel; and his feeling was that of a man who has received a blow between the eyes from his dearest friend and without provocation.

And she had left him without money. That was his own fault; she no doubt imagined that he had kept the rest of the bank-notes for himself. Yes, he had been paid out nicely for his want of rectitude, but that sense did not lessen in the least the feeling of absolute and utter disaster that this money business added to the general situation.

He took the few gold coins he possessed from his pocket, looked at them, and put them back.

Then he cursed Julia and the day he had met her and the day he had married her.

He left the room, fetched his hat from his bedroom and came downstairs.

When he reached the *salle-à-manger* he met the servant-girl, who had a letter in her hand. Julia, when she posted her letter that morning, had just been in time for the outgoing post. The postman had just delivered it, and Jack, taking it from the girl, went outside, sat down and opened it.

He read the letter carefully through. Yet, though he took in the words and the sentences, they gave him no connected impression beyond the general one that Julia had left him.

Then he read it again, and the sentence about her being miserable struck him like a blow. What had he done to make her miserable?

For a moment it seemed to him that either he or she had gone mad. Then the remembrance of his own frightful position, alone, in a strange place, without money to pay his hotel bill, and with no one to appeal to for help, dominated him and made him forgetful even of Julia for a moment.

It was all his own fault. It only wanted that fact to make the affair beyond words unbearable and to complete his anger against Julia when he remembered her again.

He got up and walked away in the direction of Eze, thinking mostly of various forms of suicide and what Julia would think when she saw the tragedy in the papers. He was not the man to commit suicide, he had far too many resources of strength in his artistic nature—that nature which enabled him to face ordinary calamities untroubled, except, perhaps, on the surface. Even were he reduced to beggary, he would no doubt find his way back to Paris on foot, painting signboards, if the worst came to the worst, and jesting with innkeepers. But in his present fantastic position he allowed himself to toy with the idea of self-destruction, taking a dim sort of pleasure in imagining Julia's despair at the act.

He walked miles and miles in this frame of mind, and then sat down on a broken wall and lit a pipe.

He was cursing Carslake now, though if he had seen the unfortunate Carslake, who was at

that moment devouring tea-cakes in the tea-shop at Mentone, he would have taken a less red view of that gentleman. The idea that Carslake had run off with Julia had not yet occurred to him, for Julia's letter was not the letter of a wife who had run off with another man. He was anathematising Carslake simply because he felt that Carslake was an intellectual friend of Julia's, and he felt by instinct that something had occurred last night which had kept Julia and Carslake from returning to the hotel, the same instinct telling him that the something was innocent. He felt Carslake to be the immediate hub of the trouble.

Then as he sat smoking, imagination, whose home is tobacco, began to make suggestions to him. Could Carslake have had anything to do with Julia's action in running away? The *improbability* of that action, the fact that it was against all his knowledge of his wife, had not been accounted for by anything in her letter.

Imagination, once on this subject, gave him no rest; he set off to return to the hotel.

When he entered the place he found evidence of some confusion; the landlord, in his shirt-

sleeves, was talking in an excited manner to several neighbours, and the landlady was standing by listening.

"Monsieur Carslake!" replied the good woman to Jack's inquiry. "Oh, monsieur, he is gone, and, *mon Dieu!* such a thing has happened! The police have been here and they have searched his room, and they have questioned Annette so that the poor girl has nearly had a fit with fright, and they have hunted in the garden at the back to see if he has hid papers in holes in the ground, and they have gone on as if we were at fault. And how were we to know that he was a spy in the pay of Italy? Why, he has not even settled his bill!"

"When did he go?" said Jack.

"Why, monsieur, he went out this morning with madame your wife, and he has not returned yet."

"With my wife!"

"Yes, monsieur," replied the woman, a look of commiseration coming into her face.

Jack sat down at one of the tables. As he did so a police official appeared from the passage leading to the upstairs room. When he

saw Jack he put down Carslake's bag, which he was carrying, and came to the unfortunate at the table. The landlady stopped him and spoke a few words. The man listened, raised his eyebrows and nodded. Then he came to the table.

"Monsieur was a friend of Monsieur Carslake's?"

Jack raised his head. His face was flaming.

"A friend of his! yes, d——n him. A friend of his, yes, and he has robbed me of everything I had in the world. Where is he—have you got him?"

"No, monsieur, but we soon will; if he escapes from France this time he will be a clever man. Will monsieur walk outside for a moment? I would like to say a word in private."

"Monsieur is aware that madame—"

"I am aware that my wife has betrayed me and has gone off with that scoundrel," replied Jack. "Is that what you mean?"

"Has monsieur any idea where his wife has gone?"

Jack laughed. He took Julia's letter from his pocket and handed it to the man.

"That's the address," said he.

He felt an odious pleasure in thus exposing his own shame and Julia's. It was necessary for him also to clear himself of any suspicion of complicity in Carslake's business.

The man, having read the letter, clicked his tongue against his teeth, folded it, put it in its envelope, after having examined the postmark, and returned it with a bow.

"Monsieur has my condolences. It only remains for me to ask him to come with me to the bureau of the Chief of Police, so that he may hear this story."

They walked to the police office, where Jack's papers were examined, his full name, address and business taken down, and Bachellry taken as a reference

Then he was free to do with himself as he pleased, and he returned to the hotel.

It was now half-past six. He had gone through so much that day that he found himself now capable of taking little interest in anything; nothing more *could* happen, he thought, and if anything *did* happen he would not care.

He had a vague idea of getting dinner some-

where and then going to the Casino, having a try with luck over the few last coins in his possession, and drowning himself if he lost. With a view to putting this plan in action, he went upstairs and dressed.

He dined at the Café Anglais, and after dinner took his way to the Casino.

He had only three louis and some silver after he paid his bill at the café; he had no hope of winning a large sum at the tables, but he thought that with care and decent luck he might possibly win enough to pay his hotel bill and his railway fare to Paris. If he could even win ten louis, that, with the three already in his possession, would be sufficient. He could return third-class.

At the first table on the right as you enter the rooms he changed all his gold, receiving in return twelve five-franc pieces; the loose silver in his possession amounting to five francs, he changed it for a five-franc piece.

This gave him thirteen chances.

He passed from table to table, undecided as to where to try his luck. He paused at the one

immediately adjoining the *trente et quarante* room.

At this table was playing an American trust magnate whom Carslake had pointed out to him the day before. A clean-shaved man, with the appearance of a butler on a holiday. He was backing number thirty-three, and Jack watched him for awhile placing piles of gold plaques on the number and always losing.

Then Jack began to play. At first he had luck, winning some forty francs or so. Then his luck began to fail him; five-franc piece after five-franc piece went, till at last only one remained. He placed it on a number, choosing nine. Thirty-one turned up, and he found himself standing in the world with a single halfpenny in his possession.

He turned and walked away, left the room, got his hat and overcoat, and went out into the night. He would have to walk back to La Turbie—what then? What would he do in the morning, with an hotel bill unpaid and not a single halfpenny in his pockets? He had nothing that he could sell or pawn, a gold collar-

stud and a Waterbury watch being all that he possessed in the way of jewellery; but he was thinking of this less than of the fact that he was thirsty and had not the money to get a drink. He put his hand in his overcoat pocket for his cigarette-case, took it out and found it empty.

He closed the case and replaced it in his pocket. Surely Fate had never treated an unfortunate mortal as she was treating him. This last little stroke was worthy of her.

Not a cigarette, even!

He had stopped close to a lamp, and as he walked on the glitter of something lying on the ground struck his eye. He stooped and saw what he thought to be a five-franc piece. He picked it up. It was a hundred-franc piece, a plaque, one of those gorgeous coins they mint at Monaco and the sight of which changing hands at the tables is at once a tonic and a stimulant to greed.

Jack, having verified his find, looked about him. No one had seen this transaction with luck, and even if they had seen him it would not have much mattered, for a single gold coin,

once dropped, belongs to the first finder by virtue of the fact that it is impossible to identify it.

Then came the sense of possession and the warmth that money gives to the heart.

The Café de Paris lay on one side of him, the Casino on the other. Both pulled at him.

"Come in and try your luck," said the Casino. "Fortune is with you, she has turned in your favour; come on before she changes."

"Please remember this," said the Café de Paris; "if you go and lose that money I won't give you credit—and you have not even a cigarette."

He turned to the Café de Paris. He felt that to change the big gold piece would be to break his luck. Instinct told him to take it into the Casino and place it on a number or a colour. Reason pointed out to him that to do so would be sheer madness, and Reason was backed by the desire for a cigarette, and Reason would not have won, perhaps, but for that backing.

He turned to the café reluctantly enough, and was passing between the tables to a seat when

he was hailed. He turned and found himself face to face with Monsieur Brouardel, a friend of Bachellry's and one of the card-party of the night before.

Monsieur Brouardel was a stout, good-natured-looking individual with a pointed beard, and when Jack took his seat at the table beside him he produced a cigarette-case and offered Jack a cigarette.

Here was luck again. Luck saying as plainly as possible, "There's your cigarette, now; off with you to the Casino."

Brouardel also suggested a drink, but Jack refused it. He did not want a drink, and if he had taken one he would have had to offer one in return.

"Are you going to Bachellry's again to-night?" asked Brouardel.

"I don't know. I may. Is he having another card-party?"

"Oh, yes," replied Brouardel; "they play every night." They talked together for a few minutes, and then Jack rose up, saying that he might turn up at Bachellry's after the Casino was closed.

"Are you going to the Casino?" said Brouardel. "Well, good luck!"

"Thanks," said the other as he turned to go.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE COUP

He entered the Casino for the second time that night with the absolute and sure conviction that he was coming for no good. That he had much better turn his plaque into silver and tramp back to Paris or get a third-class ticket. He did not know what a third-class ticket would cost him, but he was pretty sure four louis would over cover the cost. He thought of this for a moment, and he might at the last moment have put the plan in execution, but for the thought of arriving in Paris without money and without luggage.

Things are different in Bohemian Paris now from what they were in the golden days of Trilby; artists are just as generous, but much more conventional and somewhat poorer; they don't borrow and lend amongst themselves with the freedom from feeling that once characterised them, and the idea of turning up in Paris without his wife, without his luggage, and with-

out a sou was as antagonistic to Jack as the idea of death.

He passed along to the second table from the door, and stood for awhile watching the play, without taking any interest in it. Watching the jewelled women and the men in correct evening dress, the movements of the gold and silver and notes on the green board, shone upon by the steadfast lamplight.

How long he stood there he did not know. A woman, getting up and clutching in one hand her winnings, vacated her chair. He took it and sat for awhile, still watching the table and the play, and seeming to have forgotten what business it was brought him there.

Then all at once he put his hand in his pocket, took the plaque and placed it on number three. He had quite intended backing *pair*, or *passe*, or a colour—something that would give him an even chance; but all intentions and plans were forgotten in the sudden impulse that came upon him to back a number—any number.

They were all equally indifferent to him.

But now that the stake was on, now that the ball was beginning to roll, three stood up before

him with a dramatic intensity one would never dream of associating with a number.

It was, in fact, a number no longer for him, it was Paris without a penny in his pocket, even if he managed to reach Paris by borrowing the railway fare from Bachellry; it was the awful journey to Paris in a third-class railway carriage; it was everything inconceivable, everything horrible, and it was yet only a number.

For now that the stake was on, he never dreamed of winning. It was impossible.

The clatter of the ball was cut by the "*Rien-ne-va-plus!*" The ball made a last frantic circuit, paused, tottered, and fell into its socket.

"*Trois. Rouge; impair et manque.*"

He had won.

He was not surprised; so instantly did his mind adjust itself to victory, that it seemed to him that it would have been utterly impossible for him to have lost. In this he was correct. But though he was not surprised, the turmoil of his mind was tragic. There is always something tragic in salvation. His hand shook as he took the notes handed him by the croupier.

Notes and gold to the amount of a hundred and seventy-five louis. To hide his confusion from the other players he pretended to be engaged in counting the precious notes; then he placed them safely in his pocket, and taking out a paper and pencil, pretended to make notes. He could not trust himself to stand up just yet. He heard the table making itself up; he heard the "*Messieurs, faites vos jeux,*" the rattle of the ball, the "*Rien-ne-va-plus,*" the final click, and then "*Trois. Rouge; impair et manque.*"

Three had won again!

The fact made him look up, startled. Then he noticed that everyone was looking at him. He flushed angrily, and was about to rise, when across the green cloth the croupier, with a smile, pushed him another wad of notes. Then he understood.

He had forgotten to take up his plaque, and the faithful plaque had brought him another little fortune.

Then it was, and all at once, that nervousness, diffidence, and all the other associates of littleness left him, fell from him like a dropped cloak. Luck had taken him by the hand and led him to

the throne and crowned him. He felt as though he were sitting in a strong blaze of light. Light that brought vitality with it.

He was. Success in this violent form may be compared to a strong light that intoxicates and nourishes both at the same time. So far from taking his winnings and leaving the place, he boldly declared war against the tables, and opened the business by placing the maximum on black. He won. He won three times playing on the colours, and then he backed a number and lost; but this temporary check did not affect him. With the most absolute daring, and playing with the conviction of success, he continued; the *estro* had come. All the catastrophes of the past few days had combined, it would seem, not only to give him recklessness, but also, by the sudden reversal of things, the genius of success. The great high tide only comes after the great low tide.

Playing now for large stakes, he would make ten thousand francs at a turn of the wheel. Sometimes he would lose; once he lost four times in succession; but the tide came in again, flooding from the great sea of fortune, and so

it continued till he was the better of the tables by ninety-six thousand francs.

So the game stood when the *dernier* was played and play closed for the night.

He did not know how much he had won, he only knew that his winnings were immense, and that nearly four thousand pounds' worth of pink and blue notes were bulging the breast-pockets of his coat. He handed two five-hundred-franc notes to the croupiers as a gift, and rose, conscious that utter strangers were complimenting him on his success.

It seemed that he had "broken the bank," for towards the end the table had to suspend for a moment whilst more funds were obtained. He heard people telling him that he had broken the bank, but the information left him indifferent. He could feel nothing but the enchantment of success; the knowledge that he had won, and that in a brief space of time he had changed his position from that of a beggar-man to that of a man with his pockets stuffed with bank-notes left him incapable of thought.

He made his way out to the atrium, got his hat and coat from the attendants, and left the

place, going over to the Café de Paris. It seemed strange that only a couple of hours ago he had been here with not enough money to pay for a cigarette.

He sat down and ordered a drink and a cigar. He had to change a hundred-franc note to pay for them, and it was when the waiter brought him the change—four louis, a ten-franc piece and some silver—that the fact of his little fortune was first made concretely evident to him. The glitter of the gold confirmed it, and as he handled the coins, the sense of his newly-acquired wealth came to him as a concrete sensation quite wonderful in its poignancy and romance.

Luck, when she hits one on the shoulder with her jester's bauble as she had just hit Jack Revell, is a greater lady than Art, and the artistic temperament bows to her lower than it has ever bowed to the colder goddess.

So powerfully had her touch affected Jack, that he had for the moment forgotten Julia. The remembrance of her was his first awakening to the reality of things, and it came like the edge of a steel instrument through the texture

of his dreams, not destroying, but dividing them.

Never, never in this world is there a human triumph without some ugly thing tied to the chariot of the victor and following it. It may be only a span high, or it may be twenty cubits, but it is there.

Julia was the thing following Jack's chariot now and spoiling his triumph.

Ah! If things had only been different; if he could have gone up to La Turbie and shown her his fortune! What was the good of anything? She had gone off with another man.

Had he been reading his own story in a novel, Jack Revell would have been perfectly assured of Julia's infidelity. He had enough reasons for the suspicion that amounts to a certainty, and which is even worse than a certainty, but in real life he was by no means assured of the fact. He told himself that she had gone off with Carslake, yet in his heart of hearts he did not believe it in the least. You see, he had a terrible knowledge of Julia; he had absorbed her unconsciously during all the years of their married life; he knew her perfections and imperfec-

tions, her littlenesses and bignesses, her straightness and her crookedness, with a thoroughness that was startling. Yet he had never pried upon her movements or thoughts, never analysed her critically or reasoned in the least about her. He had absorbed her through his skin, so to speak, and without study had absorbed the genius of her being. He knew her far better than he knew himself, and he did not in the least know that he had this knowledge of her. Had he questioned himself, the replies often would have indicated that he had no knowledge of her, for she often in small matters acted in a way that he did not expect. But his knowledge of her had nothing to do with small matters, but with great keystone matters, and on these his subconscious mind was assured.

This assurance, however, did not mend matters in the least for him or soften him towards the delinquent. It only served to make her proceedings more inexplicable, and to raise more violently against her the original man in his composition.

He rose up and wandered away from the café.

He did not know what to do with himself exactly. If Julia had been at La Turbie, he would have gone up there at once; but the return to the quiet little hotel alone seemed a flat business after all the past excitement.

He remembered Bachellry, and determined to call upon him at the "Côte d'Azur."

It was now nearly midnight; the theatrical people would have finished supper and be sitting down to cards. He turned up the steep street leading to the Rue de la Tour, and entered the hotel.

M. Bachellry and his party were still at supper in the *salle-à-manger*. Would monsieur step in?

Jack did.

At a table in the corner of the deserted dining-room Bachellry, Madame de Corcieux, Fatou Gaye, and the rest were seated still at table, smoking cigarettes, laughing and talking, and scarcely listening to Bompard, who was trying to make a speech.

At the entrance of Jack all heads turned, and a frozen silence fell upon the party.

They returned his salutation, and he took

his seat amongst them, feeling somehow that he was very much out of place.

The fact of the matter was that the police had applied to Bachellry as to Jack—a very natural action, since the suspected one had given them Bachellry as a reference. Bachellry, good-hearted enough though he was, had a horror of the police; and though he had answered readily enough that M. Revell was a painter of great promise, and that without doubt he was in no way implicated in the Carslake business, the affair had disturbed him. It was so with the rest, all of whom knew, moreover, that Julia Revell, the staid young English wife, had eloped with the spy. The police had spread this information too.

Jack's brilliant eyes and generally disordered appearance gave them the impression that he had been drinking.

There was a general movement as if to rise, but the new-comer intervened.

"You are not going yet; stay and have a glass of wine with me." He made a sign to a waiter, who was arranging glasses on the sideboard, and the waiter came towards him.

"But we have finished," said Bachellry; "to-morrow, my friend, we will drink with you with pleasure. Besides, I have a throat."

"I too," said Madame de Corcieux. "It is the air of Monte Carlo, and there is only one cure for it—rest, so I am going to bed."

"Oh, no," said Jack, "you are not. *Garçon!* two magnums of Pommery. You are not going to bed till you drink to my luck. Guess what has just happened. I have broken the bank."

"Broken the bank!" cried Bachellry.

"Broken the bank!" cried the others. They thought his misfortune had driven him mad, and they scarcely dared to laugh, afraid that his madness might take some violent turn.

"I have broken the bank, and when I entered the Casino this evening I had nothing in my pocket but a single hundred-franc piece."

This made them certain.

"My friend," said Bachellry, "we congratulate you. It is very interesting. *Mon Dieu!* with a single plaque! Ah, my poor throat!" He rose from his chair, but sat down again, for Jack was now taking his winnings from his pocket.

At the sight of the wads of bank-notes the faces around the table changed as though touched by enchantment. It was true then! He had broken the bank! He was illustrious, a hero; the only sort of hero who has any honour at Monte Carlo!

They watched without breathing whilst he unloaded his treasure. He seemed like some traveller from the Fortunate Isles, some wanderer returned from El Dorado. It was the only thing they could really understand beside their art, which made them able to understand and interpret all things.

"Let's see how much it is," said Jack. "I haven't counted it."

He spread out a gorgeous thousand-franc note, placed another on top of it and another on top of that. The others counted with him, and the waiter, with the open magnum in his hand, who had just arrived, did not pour out the wine, but paused to watch like the rest.

"Ten," said Jack, putting a piece of sugar on the first bundle to mark it. Then he went on counting and placing the notes in bundles of

tens, so that they had to push away the fruit-dishes to make room.

There were ninety-four notes of a thousand francs, some hundred-franc notes, and the gold and silver in his pockets.

He put the whole lot on the table.

"And I made all that out of a hundred-franc piece," said he.

"Oh, *mon Dieu!*" murmured Fatou Gaye. "What a man you are!"

She had never given him a thought before, notwithstanding all the glad eyes she had cast upon him.

"You are a magician," said Madame de Corcieux.

"No, he's an artist!" cried Bachellry. "No one but an artist could have brought Fortune to his feet like that, and with a hundred-franc piece. Incredible!"

The waiter, who had been looking on like a hungry dog before the butcher's shop, was now running round the table, filling glasses with champagne. Jack was replacing his winnings in his pockets, and the others, raised to the seventh heaven of excitement by the coup and

the prospect of limitless champagne, were crying: "Tell us about it."

Jack, for them, was surrounded by a golden aura.

Affluence herself had come into the room. He was a magician, a fairy prince, a being just returned from the court of Fortune.

He told everything—how he had lost what money was in his pocket, having not even the train fare back to La Turbie. How he had found the gold plaque, and how he had placed it *en plein* on number three.

"There you are," said Bachellry. "He risked everything. I have always said that unless you risk everything in life you never do anything great. Look at me! You all know how I chucked the law for the stage—burned my boats. Yes, you never win unless you risk, and the more you risk the more you win."

Jack told of his second piece of fortune in forgetting to pick up the plaque, and then he went on all through the amazing story, fighting the battle over again. When he had finished, they asked to see the wonderful plaque; they

hung over it, passing it from hand to hand, and examining it with the devotion of savages before a *gri-gri*. It was a mascot of mascots, and if Jack had been in the mood for learning, he might have learned from the scene before him something of the superstition that rules the modern world, where men, as regards charms, sorcerers, prophets and mascots, are not a whit in advance of the men of the middle ages.

When they had admired and wondered enough, they all went upstairs to play cards. Jack ordered a bedroom, for the lonely journey back to La Turbie did not appeal to him; he also ordered up a box of cigars and more champagne, Brouardel and several others having arrived.

To these the story had to be told again, and then they all sat down to cards. Baccarat for small stakes was the game, and Jack lost five pounds in the course of a couple of hours, feeling very much as Gulliver might have felt if he had sat down to cards with the Liliputians.

It was now three o'clock in the morning, and bidding good-nights to the rest, he rose to go.

In the passage outside, as he passed down it, he was stopped by a voice at his elbow. It was Fatou Gaye. She had followed him.

CHAPTER XIX

THE SPIRIT OF MONTE CARLO

Fatou had been drinking a good deal of champagne; she had been smoking cigarettes, and she had won a couple of louis.

She was laughing now rather thickly, and she took Jack by the arm as if to steady herself.

"Come here for a moment," said Fatou. "I want to speak to you."

She placed her hand on a door-handle, opened the door, and, switching on the electric light, exposed to view a little sitting-room. Next moment Jack found himself alone with Fatou Gaye, who had closed the door.

She took her seat on the corner of the centre table and proceeded to light a cigarette, laughing as she did so, whilst the alarmed Jack looked about him as if for a means of escape.

He did not in the least wish to be alone with the damsel, especially considering the fact that he had ninety-four thousand-franc notes on his person, and that she knew it.

"See here," said Fatou, who had mastered the cigarette. "I've heard all about your wife. Poor old chap—how did it happen?"

"What happen? Nothing has happened."

Fatou laughed.

"I knew it all the time; the first time I set eyes on her I knew what she was; and she was always so *très comme il faut!* Bah! Where are you going?"

Jack had turned to the door.

"I'm going to bed, I'm tired."

"Going to leave me like that! Don't be a fool!"

Her arm was round him.

"Let go," said Jack. "It's nearly four in the morning. Let go; I don't want to have anything to do with you."

"Oh, you don't, don't you? Don't want to have anything to do with me? And d'ye think I want to have anything to do with *you?* But you're not going to insult me and go off like that."

She turned the key, whipped it from the door and, running to the window, opened it.

"D'you see that?" cried she, holding up the key.

Without waiting for a reply she flung the key out of the window; then, turning, she crossed her arms and laughed.

Semi-intoxication had given her face a plum colour, her eyes a fixity, and her voice a hoarseness that made a combination noxious to the sense of man. One saw before her as she stood with folded arms the washing-tubs (or their equivalent) of innumerable ancestresses, and in her face the essential animal of the Frenchwoman—the wild cat.

All that Julia had said about this creature recalled itself to the mind of Jack as he stood gazing at her and wishing himself away. The humorous aspect of the affair did not appeal to him at all.

"Well," said Fatou Gaye, "what have you to say now?"

"Nothing; only that you have made a fool of yourself. How am I to leave this room? What will you say to the hotel people about that key? Good heavens! was there ever such

a position! It's no laughing matter, you needn't stand there laughing. You wouldn't if you saw yourself."

This taunt had no more effect on the laughing one than a drop of water on a duck's back. She closed the window, still laughing, went to a door on the right of the room, opened it, switched on the electric light, and disclosed a bedroom.

Then with a grimace at the man she went into the bedroom, shut the door, and locked it.

Jack took his seat on a chair and tried to review his position. Both doors were impracticable; there was no chimney, the window alone offered a means of escape. He came to it and opened it gently, for fear of attracting the attention of his captor.

Impossible. A ray from the low-sinking moon struck the tops of orange-trees growing in the courtyard The orange-tree tops were forty feet at least below the window-sill.

He closed the window gently and came back to the chair.

For five minutes he sat listening to the sounds from the other room. Feet stamping about and

the noise of a wardrobe being opened and shut with a bang.

Then, suddenly, the lock was shot and the bedroom door flung wide, disclosing my lady in half undress, a bedroom tumbler in her hand, with something in it which she had been drinking the while she had been attempting to unfasten the back of her bodice and failing. It was brandy and water. She held the glass in one hand, whilst with the other hand she made vain attempts to reach the four shoulder-blade buttons of the bodice. It was a wonderful sight, for she was doing three things all at the same time—having a drink, trying to unbutton her dress, and abusing Jack.

Her hair was down, and it did not add to her beauty; champagne, brandy, and anger had combined to make her forget everything; looks were nothing to her. She was a great actress in her way, but never had she risen above the world on the wings of art as she did now on the wings of abandonment. She was frightful, yet at the same time horribly funny.

She abused the man before her as the fishwoman of the Halles abuses a market porter;

her language was frightful, senseless, and she swayed during the exordium so that he thought now and then to see her fall flat on the floor. Then off she went into her room, shutting the door with her foot.

* * * * * *

He recognised that morning and sobriety were now to be his only deliverers, and, switching off the light, he lay down on the couch opposite the window, without daring to go asleep.

He did not know that the fiend in the next room would not alter her mind and pursue a more active course in quest of the bank-notes which he felt to be her main objective. But Mademoiselle Miton was no robber; her passion for Jack was her passion for his money, but she was not the person to steal. He recognised this ten minutes later by the sounds that came from the next room. She was snoring.

"Thank God!" said he.

The whole business was so preposterous and so absolutely without precedent in his experience that at times he felt almost doubtful of his own wakefulness. It was the sort of thing

one would dream after eating pork, the ravings of a distorted stomach.

But the sounds from the next room made him fully assured of the reality of his wakefulness, and he fell to imagining the scene in the morning when she woke up and remembered what she had done with the key.

Was there a door to her bedroom?

On this question depended whether he might escape unobserved in the morning, or whether the pair of them would have to be freed by the hotel manageress, who doubtless had a master-key for all the rooms. Then the idea came to him—why not escape now by her bedroom door. She is sound asleep and if you went on tip-toe—

No sooner thought of than done. He opened the bedroom door more cautiously even than the murderer in Edgar Allan Poe's terrific story, "The Tell-tale Heart."

She had left the electric light full on, and in the full glare of it she lay asleep on her back, with an arm hanging down after the fashion of Chatterton in that picture where he lies on the couch poisoned.

But the reserve and decency of hydrocyanic acid was absent from this living picture of a being poisoned by alcohol and nicotine. With mouth open, hair flung loose on the pillow, hands clenched, snoring she lay, a sight to make Vice admit the artistic value of Virtue.

Jack, scarcely glancing at this spectacle, stole on tip-toe to the door of the room. It was half-covered with frocks hanging from hooks, and it was locked, but fortunately the key was in the lock.

He turned the key gently, ever so gently, turned the handle, opened the door and was in the passage.

He was free now; even if she were to wake up he could clap the door to and bolt. And feeling his security, the spirit of mischief urged him to get even with his adversary. He took the key from the lock, closed the door, and, locking it, put the key in his pocket. When she awoke in the morning and found both doors locked and the keys gone she would have something to think about.

Then he made for his own room. He easily found it, for the hotel people had given him the

same room which he had inhabited with Julia on their first coming to Monte Carlo.

He turned up the light and shut the door, locking it, you may well be sure.

Then he sat down on the couch by the window and laughed. It seemed to him that Monte Carlo was first cousin to the town imagined by Jules Verne—the town that Dr. Ox drove mad with oxygen. Julia, Carslake, Fatou Gaye, the tables, all seemed part and parcel of a fantastic dream. He remembered Julia's complaint on the evening of their first arrival about the apparent dullness of the place.

The remembrance of her words brought her vision before him clearly. Heavens! was it possible that she and the creature he had just left were of the same order of beings? He remembered her dictum that women differed from each other as much as kangaroos differ from crocodiles, and he remembered how she had always spoken of Fatou Gaye.

He remembered that the latter had never impressed him unfavourably, and with this recognition of Julia's superiority of judgment, he stretched himself on the couch and fell asleep.

He was awakened by a beam of sunlight, and, looking at his watch, found that it was nine o'clock. The four hours' sleep had refreshed him wonderfully; with that mysterious essence which sleep infuses into life and with the sense that money worries were no more, had returned somewhat of his old lighthearted and irresponsible way of looking at things. He remembered that he was in his evening clothes. He had left his overcoat and hat in the hall of the hotel, and he now came downstairs, paid his bill, and then, with his overcoat buttoned to the throat so as to hide the tell-tale evening tie, left the place.

Half an hour later he was entering the hotel at La Turbie. The table where he usually breakfasted was waiting for him, and on the table lay a letter.

He opened it. It was the letter written by Carslake the day before and given to the goatherd to post. As he cast his eyes over the words his heart jumped in him. Here was news of Julia at last. Then a chill came over him. Who had written this letter? It was in a man's handwriting; it had been posted at Monte Carlo. He had never seen the hand-

writing before to his knowledge; who, then, could possibly be the stranger who knew of his wife's movements and had taken the trouble to write anonymously about them? Julia knew no one in Monte Carlo with the exception of the Frekes, the last people in the world to send such a letter. Besides, this was not an old man's handwriting; it bore youth and vigour in every line.

So taken up was he with this problem, that he breakfasted without changing, and quite oblivious to the fact that he was still in his evening clothes.

CHAPTER XX

A VISION OF THE DEMON OF THE TABLES

JACK, when he had finished breakfast, went upstairs. The letter he had just received produced a double effect on his mind: relief at having received news of his wife's whereabouts, and irritation at the mysterious manner in which it had been conveyed. To what man had she entrusted this information?

Carslake was the only man possible. He had almost dismissed from his mind the idea that Julia had run off with Carslake. Julia's letter made things clear enough; the truth, that Carslake was intervening to patch up the quarrel between him and Julia, was insisting itself upon his understanding, and this idea, so far from making him feel kindly towards the intermediary, exasperated him.

What right had a stranger to interfere in this business? What right had Julia to take a stranger into her confidence? Most likely she

had been discussing him with Carslake, complaining of his defects, and his Bohemianism, and his friendship with Bachellry, whilst Carslake with that tolerant smile of his, made excuses for him.

"Oh, he is not really a bad sort of fellow; you see, he has the artistic temperament, etc.—"

He began to pack furiously, pausing now and then to light a cigarette.

He would go back to Paris and treat Julia just as she had treated him; give her no address, pursue a policy of masterly inactivity. That was the only way to deal with a woman of her sort.

He strapped his things, and then went into Julia's rooms. She had left behind her a small tin trunk. It was locked, and it stood there as if waiting for him to remove it with the rest of his things.

The sight of it recalled the vision of Julia with the power of alchemy. He remembered how he had sat on the lid of it in Paris. It was one of those trunks that refuse to be locked by kindness and coaxing, brutality and bad language alone appealed to it; and he remembered

how he had sat on it and sworn whilst Julia on her knees had worked at the hasp.

He would have to bring the thing back with him to Paris.

He went downstairs, paid his bill and ordered the luggage to be put on a carriage.

"And madame?" asked the landlady.

"I am going to join her," replied he.

Though he had decided on going to Paris, he had not yet decided as to whether he should leave Monte Carlo that day. The brilliant sunshine, the scene of his triumph, and an obscure something for which he could not account held him reluctant to leave. A day more or less would not matter.

He left his belongings at the railway station, and, returning, strolled through the town. Never did the place look more bright, more fascinating, more joyous than this morning beneath the cloudless sky. It would be raining most likely in Paris to-day; it was sure to be cold; the trees in the public gardens would not have a leaf on them. The Pension Nix—b-r-r!—the recollection of it and its darkness and stuffiness affected him almost as much as the recollection

of it affected Julia. The only thing that troubled him was the Bachellry party. He did not wish to meet them after the incident of last night with Fatou Gaye.

Fatou was just the lady to pull one's hair in the street, and visions of an altercation were haunting him unpleasantly as he turned a corner and walked almost into the arms of the person in question.

Fatou was out for an early morning walk, and when she saw Jack before her, instead of pulling his hair, she burst into a laugh.

"*Ma foi!* How droll!" cried she. "Here we are again. I have taken my poor head out for a walk; it is nearly crazy with your bad champagne. How do *you* feel?"

Jack, at the impudence of this implication, could not help laughing.

"I feel all right."

"And the keys?" said Fatou. "How many keys did we throw out of the window last night, and how did you get out?"

"I jumped down from the window."

"Ah, you are English," said she, as though that explained everything. They walked down

the street together. She seemed to have forgotten and forgiven everything. Her *sang-froid* was a revelation of a certain class and a certain temperament. Fatou lived entirely for the moment. If she were attacking you with vile words and a hatpin, she acted but on the impulse of the moment; if she were befriending you or doing a kindly action, she acted on the impulse of the moment. Her mind had no deep roots in the past and threw no branches into the future. Her heaven was a picture of angels she had seen as a child, and she had no ideas about hell at all.

Money attracted her; she had no ideas on physical beauty or moral. I doubt if she could have told the difference between a handsome and an ugly man; she certainly could not have distinguished between spiritual and carnal comeliness. This insensibility to the charm of good looks is the most astonishing thing in natures such as Fatou's, and is the surest indication of a debased and savage type.

I doubt if she would have bothered at all about Jack Revell but for the fact that he was successful and had made money at the tables; but it

would be a grave mistake to suppose that the episode of the night before arose from her desire for his money, or any wish to trick him out of it. No, his money and his success had acted on her with the potency of a physical charm, and the champagne had done the rest.

"I have not had breakfast yet," said she. "Have you?"

"Yes, I breakfasted up at La Turbie."

"Well, you can breakfast again; I'm hungry."

She stopped at the Café Anglais, where they had coffee and rolls, Jack falling in with the idea mainly because he was glad of someone to talk to.

"When are you going back to Paris?" asked Fatou.

"To-morrow, I think."

"We go the day after; you'd better wait and come with us. Shan't you be glad to get back?"

"I don't know. Will you?"

"*Ma foi,* yes. I am like a fish out of water when you take me from Paris; so's Bachellry. Bompard is the only one that wants to stay; but he's a southerner."

"But won't you be sorry to leave all this behind you?"

"All what?"

"The sea and the sunshine and the flowers?"

Fatou made a face.

"You can get flowers in Paris, can't you? I always hated the sea. No, give me Paris; one can breathe in Paris."

Jack laughed and turned the conversation. It was still quite early in the morning—so early, in fact, that the regular breakfasters at the place had not arrived, which fact gave them a certain isolation, as though they were picnicking together.

He drew Fatou out, and she talked of herself and of her life.

Her people were quite poor; she stated the fact without reserve. They lived at Vitry, and Fatou had come to Paris to help an aunt, who kept a small shop in the Rue de la Harpe. She talked of her aunt as though Jack were an intimate acquaintance of the family. She told of how Bostoc, the theatre manager, had taken her up.

It seems that she was most admirably adapted for certain parts. Her vein was not of a high type of metal, but it was rich of its kind. She could, in fact, act Herself, and as she represented a large majority of feminine France, and had her prototypes everywhere in the highest and lowest circles, she paid. Fatou, in fact, was the Frenchwoman pure and simple. Animal first, actress second and always. She was the explanation of the Frenchman as he is, and of his outlook upon womanhood.

The most extraordinary thing about Fatou was the fact of her power over men. Not for evil or good especially, but just her power to keep them in her presence, uncritical and satisfied with her company. The keenest brains and intellects fall under this spell which so many women exert; and though men, when out of the presence of the particular woman who exercises the spell, may laugh at her, criticise her, and wonder how they could have seen anything in her, in her presence they have been reduced to the condition of mesmerised hens.

So Jack found himself perfectly uncritical

and enjoying the companionship of this woman, notwithstanding the hideous display she had made of herself the night before.

"Well," said Fatou, when she had finished, "I must be getting back to the hotel. We have arranged for a luncheon-party; you'd better come. It's our last day here, and we'll have lots of friends. Half-past twelve at the 'Côte d'Azur.' I'll tell Bachellry you are coming."

"All right," said Jack.

It seemed to him as good as anything else in the way of killing time. He paid the bill, and they left the café, walking together in the direction of the "Côte d'Azur."

Arrived at the hotel, they parted, and he walked back down the town in the direction of the Casino.

One might have thought that he had had enough of the Casino; but the remembrance of his sufferings there was eclipsed by the splendour of his success. He did not know the hold the place had established upon him till his eye caught a glimpse of the white façade in the morning sunshine.

Even then he held off for a moment, smoking

a cigarette at the Café de Paris and watching the passers-by.

Should he go over and have another bout with the tables? Was his luck still with him? He could try. He would take one note for a thousand francs, and if he lost that he would stop; a thousand francs more or less did not matter. And if his luck was as good as on the night before, he might simply sweep the place. He might make ten or twenty thousand pounds.

When he had gambled with Julia's money he had started with the same determination, the determination of a man to whom drink is fatal only to take one glass and no more.

He took the notes from his breast-pocket, selected one and returned the others. He made the fixed resolve that if he lost this note he would leave the rooms never to return, and with the resolve in his mind and the note in the pocket of his waistcoat, he crossed over to the Casino. He received his ticket, gave up his hat and walking-stick, and crossed the atrium.

Play had only just begun, yet the place was crowded.

As he entered and as the swing-door closed

behind him, a report like the bursting of a motor-tyre shook the place; then came the shrill screaming of women and the shouting of men, and the second table from the entrance was surrounded by a gesticulating crowd, whilst attendants rushed towards it from all quarters, and police appeared as if from nowhere.

A man had shot himself through the head with a Browning pistol.

Jack saw the crowd divide and the attendants carrying something off, something bulky and covered with an overcoat. The coat slipped, and he saw the face of the thing they were carrying. The face of a fat, pale, bearded man; it wore gold spectacles, so fastened behind the ears that they had not been disturbed; the mouth was hanging open, and the man seemed wildly laughing. Yet he was dead, and from the blue stain on the forehead a trickle of blood ran down the cheek.

He had lost everything the night before, and had borrowed a hundred francs this morning and had lost that.

Such was the story Jack heard men telling one another as he stood horrified and astonished,

and feeling as though some devil that inhabited the place had suddenly appeared, spoken and vanished.

He turned to the door; even as he turned, the excitement was dying down and play was recommencing. He passed through the atrium, got his hat and stick, and then found himself in the open air.

Monte Carlo seemed quite changed; a tinge of horror touched everything—the sunlight, the blue sky, the gay crowds; the people seated at the cafés all bore some relation to that fat white face with the gold spectacles and the blue mark on the forehead.

He had often talked and laughed about people shooting themselves at the tables; the reality was no laughing matter, and he felt like a man who had escaped some hideous danger, but who would never escape from the remembrance of it.

Something said to him: "Fly; the spirit of this place is death to you. Already it has spoiled a happy married life; go before it does worse."

He remembered the luncheon-party to which

he had pledged himself with Bachellry. The thought filled him with disgust.

He glanced at his watch. It was after ten o'clock. Where should he go? Paris?

He stood for a moment as if undecided. Then he turned in the direction of the railway station.

"At what time does the train start for Ventimiglia?" he asked one of the railway officials.

"The train is now due, monsieur," replied the man.

The coincidence seemed to him like the pointing of a finger. He went to the ticket-office, bought his ticket, and ordered his luggage to be put on board the train which at that moment came steaming into the station.

He had determined on going to Bordighera. But what would he do when he got there? Suppose Julia *had* gone off with Carslake—suppose, even, she had made arrangements to meet him there? Suppose that he found them together?

If he did, it would be all the worse for Carslake. At Ventimiglia he hired a carriage, had the luggage put on it and started for Bordighera. He reached the little town on the stroke of twelve, and leaving his luggage at a small

hotel near the station, started on foot in search of his wife.

A glint of blue sea showing down a by-street on the right of the main street caught his eye; he turned down the by-street to have a look at the sea and think things over and arrange in his mind what he should say when they met.

He found himself on the path by the beach, and walked along it towards the Kursaal.

Chance led him in this direction—or perhaps Fate.

CHAPTER XXI

THE ADVENTURES OF CARSLAKE (*continued*)

CARSLAKE, when he stepped on to the Mentone platform and saw the Chief of Police almost within touching distance of him, felt for the first time in his life that the game was lost past retrieving. Only for a second did this feeling last. In the next he had summed up the position. It was absolutely hopeless to attempt to board the train; he must try back, though that course condemned him to the walking of the streets of Mentone and certain arrest. Still, anything was better than to stay where he was.

He turned, and made his way back to the station entrance.

A motor-car, which he had noticed when he came up to the station, was still standing, waiting apparently for some one. A girl was sitting in it. She was the tall American girl whom he had noticed bidding good-bye to the old lady.

Carslake, without a moment's hesitation, went up to the car and placed his hand upon the door;

as he did so he heard the whistle of the departing train.

"Save me," said he. "The police are after me. I am not a criminal, only a secret service man who has been spying on the forts—English."

"Get in," said the girl.

She spoke without the least hesitation or surprise in her tone. She seemed to have summed up the whole situation at a glance, and the desperate urgency of the matter, and she pointed to a pony-skin coat on the seat as the chauffeur came up. He had been on some message to one of the shops in the street near by and he was evidently an Englishman.

This fact Carslake noticed as he wriggled into the coat. He wondered what the girl would do. Everything was in her hands now, and if she made a false move he was lost.

"William," said the girl, "Mrs. James has left her pocket-book in the car and the train has just started. There's nothing for it but to go to Ventimiglia and catch her before she starts for Genoa. Have you petrol enough?"

"Yes, miss. I believe so."

"Then off we go. Mr. Smith, would you sooner sit in front or here?"

"Here, by all means," said Carslake.

Whilst the chauffeur was starting the engine, the girl was rummaging in a leather wallet fastened to the car door.

"If your eyes are sensitive you might like these goggles," said she, producing a pair. "Uncle wears them. Some people wear things like masks that cover all their faces. They are convenient sometimes; but I haven't got any."

"Thanks, awfully," said Carslake, as he put on the goggles, whilst the car slid out of the station precincts, turned the corner, passed down a narrow street and then, turning to the right, down the broad road where the shops were.

As they picked up speed, the wind made conversation possible without danger of the chauffeur overhearing.

"You are putting me in debt to you for my liberty," said Carslake, speaking in an ordinary conversational tone. "I can't say anything at all by way of thanks; it's not one of the things a man can put in words. But, tell me, how did you in one moment hit upon the only plan, for

if you had taken me in any other direction than Ventimiglia I would have been lost?"

"Well, if you want to get out of France in a hurry, what other way would I have taken you? Paris?—it's only a few miles to the frontier this way, and William knows the road—ought to, for he's been half a dozen times with us to San Remo. But you're not out of the wood yet. Look!"

Ahead of them, and posted on either side of the road just where it leaves the town, stood two policemen.

"Will they stop us?" said the girl. "If they do, you are Mr. Smith, an American from Vermont. No, they won't stop us."

She was right, the splendid motor-car, driven by a chauffeur in livery, was not what these gentlemen were looking for. They were on the watch for a dusty and hunted fugitive.

The car passed them and the girl laughed.

"I expect you're pretty safe now," said she; "if those men did not stop us, no one else will; and now that you are out of the trap, tell me about yourself. What on earth are you doing spying in this part of the world? I've read the

'Riddle of the Sands,' and I can see the sense of finding out about Borkum and places like that, but when is England going to attack the Alps that she wants to know all about the forts here."

"I'm not in the service of England," said Carslake. "I belong to the Austrian service." Then he explained. She listened with interest, putting in a word now and then and showing herself to be possessed of a keen mind. She was the sort of girl who, in times of war and danger, finds herself, and who, in times of peace and quiet, plays tennis.

"And you do all that for the love of it?" asked she.

"Yes; and for the pay—which is not bad. Of course, I take no part against England."

"You don't want to, either. England takes parts enough against herself. 'Wake up England!' Don't you think if England had any sense of humour she'd burk that piece of advice instead of placarding it on every hoarding, advertising herself as an ass. Do you know what kills nations quicker than anything?"

"No."

"Want of the sense of humour."

Carslake laughed. They had topped the hill of La Mortola now and were passing the gates of the Villa Hanbury, then they began the steep descent that leads to Ventimiglia.

Carslake was practically safe now, and when the houses of the town came into view he turned to his companion.

"I want you to shake hands with me," said he. "I have no words at all to thank you with; we'll be in the town in a few minutes now and it's better that we say good-bye here. I don't even know your name."

"Adams," said she.

"Adams isn't all your name?"

"Jane's the other part."

They shook hands and she laughed.

"I expect I'll be late back for dinner. We are staying at the 'Beau Rivage.' I ought to have given you my address as well as my name. I'm staying with my uncle, Curtis Adams."

"I know that name," said Carslake. "He is the financier."

"Yes."

"And I suppose this is his car?"

"Yes."

"Well, will you give him a message from me —I suppose you'll tell him all about this adventure?"

"Oh, yes, I wouldn't miss seeing his face for the world, when he hears the story."

"Well, tell him some day he may hear from me news that will be useful to him, for I am not outside the inner circles of European diplomacy; and, without betraying a trust, one may still be able to give a valuable hint."

"I'll tell him."

They had passed the city boundary now and Carslake was safe.

"You are going to the railway station?"

"Yes," replied Miss Adams. "I must, for form's sake, though what I'll say to Mrs. James I don't know. There's just the chance that the Genoa train may have started, and if that's so I'll have no trouble, otherwise I'll have to tell lies and pretend I came on just for a freak."

When the car stopped at the railway station, Carslake wriggled out of the coat, gave up the goggles and got out.

"I shall be staying at the Hôtel Angst, Bordi-

ghera," said he. "It's only three miles or so from here, why not bring your uncle over to luncheon some day?"

"Why not come and have luncheon with us?" She laughed. "Funny, isn't it? You couldn't, if you wanted to."

"Couldn't I," said Carslake. "What do you bet me I don't? However, we'd better leave the thing open—"

"Yes, that's the best way," said the girl. She got out, they shook hands, and she went into the station.

Carslake walked away. In all his adventurous life he had never experienced a closer shave or a more miraculous escape. The splendid girl who had helped him clung in his memory, not as a woman clings—she seemed more like a comrade suddenly sprung from nowhere for his salvation and as suddenly vanished.

He was at home in Ventimiglia. It was his base of operations, and at the Hôtel San Fillipo he had some luggage always waiting him and a room reserved.

He went to the hotel now, ordered dinner, and after dinner called upon a gentleman not un-

connected with the Italian Diplomatic Service. The interview lasted till eleven o'clock that night, and after it was over he found himself free of business for some days to come, with the fruits of his labours in safe hands to be transmitted to headquarters.

He was not thinking of this as he walked back to the hotel, he was thinking of Julia. The excitement of the last few hours had put her from his mind, and now that he was free to think she returned in the form of an image living and potent.

This ghost which he could not lay was asking him a question which he could not answer: Of what use is it to a man if he gains the whole world and loses the woman he wants?

Julia was in his hands and he could have clasped and held her—and he had let her go. He had played Jack Revell's game when he might have played his own.

He felt he had done the right thing, but that feeling brought him very little satisfaction. He had let Julia go—spurned her, almost, from him.

Arrived at the hotel he went to his room.

Carslake was a man whose greatest safeguard against dishonour was his rigid partisanship on his own behalf against all the demons of the mind that hound a man on to questionable acts. The demons who cry out, "You might have done this," and "You were a fool to do that." As a rule, these voices were dumb, but in Julia's case they were loud and insistent, and in Julia's case the partisanship on his own behalf was not so pronounced.

He was beginning to waver. Beginning to add his own voice to the voices that told him he had made a fool of himself. Why had he not been strong enough to disregard everything, even his thought for Julia's future and *make* that future with her himself. She would never be happy with her husband—so he now told himself—but she would go back to him, no doubt, urged by conventions, and finish out an incomplete life by the side of a man she tolerated but never could love.

All these pronouncements showed a wildly different state of mind from that in which he had argued with Julia on behalf of her husband. It was not so much a change in point of view;

his very brain had changed. He had expended all his probity as regards woman that morning, and now the reaction had come. The original man, tricked and baulked of his sexual mate, was now having his say.

And what he said kept the unhappy Carslake awake till the small hours of the next morning.

He was late in getting up, and it was half-past nine before he had finished breakfast. His time was his own, and the day lay before him to do what he liked in.

This gift of time is of rather doubtful blessing in Ventimiglia, where there is nothing especially to do and nowhere especially to go.

But Carslake was not thinking of Ventimiglia, the burning question in his mind was: "Shall I go on to Bordighera?"

Bordighera was only three miles or so away, and Julia was there. Should he go and see her? He did not hide from himself in the least the object of his visit. He would say to her quite simply, "I made a mistake; man is stronger than convention, and Love is stronger than Prudence. I love you. Come straight away

with me, and let us make a new life and a new existence—"

He was actually rehearsing the jargon of the "petty pornographists" and the cant phrases of the fictional-adultery mongers. After having behaved to Jack Revell as a man and a brother, he was now debating in his mind as to whether he should betray him and play him a dirty trick. After having preached against the immorality of seduction, he was now preparing to play the part of seducer. And he was not acting as a hypocrite in the least. This was part of his nature.

A man is no stronger, morally, than his weakest part. Let his will be as powerful as it may, the weak spot will always be there for his destruction. Of what use are the most powerful engines to a ship if a deficient plate is ready to fall away and leave her a waterlogged wreck. The true nature of that ship is not in her appearance of strength but in the reality of her weakness.

When Carslake had talked to Julia that night of their first meeting in the Casino, he meant every word that he said, and it was perhaps

the unconscious knowledge of himself that prompted him to his tirade against the modern evil. Sick of the literature of adultery and the atmosphere of it which pervades modern society with its stench, he had spoken straight out from what he considered to be his mind, unconscious of the fact that the mind and the man are twain.

When he had finished breakfast, he lit a cigar and strolled out, taking the direction of Bordighera. Ventimiglia, take it how you will, is not a pleasant town. This ugly outpost of Italy has nothing at all to say of the charms that lie behind it, and the road from Ventimiglia to Bordighera is, for the first mile or so, as plain featured as the town it starts from.

But Carslake had eyes neither for the beauty of the day nor the ugliness of the road. He was thinking of Julia and what he would say to her when they met, and he was wondering whether Jack Revell had received his letter.

It was now after eleven; he would not reach the Hôtel Bella Vista till after twelve; possibly, if Jack had started by an early train he was already in Bordighera.

Would the quarrel have deepened between

Jack and his wife and would they have parted again, or would they, following the illogical habit of some married couples, have forgotten and forgiven everything and started again cheerfully on the road to the next quarrel?

He passed the octroi of Bordighera and entered the pleasant little town, making his way along the main street, and then uphill towards the hotel, and always on the look out for the form of the woman who now dominated his every thought.

He did not see her, and at the hotel he found that she was out.

Madame had been out some time; she had declared her intention of going down to the seashore; but if monsieur would wait, she would most likely be back now at any moment.

Carslake said he would not wait, but would return in an hour or so; and then he made his way down hill again, determined to try the shore. Anything was better than waiting.

He passed down the main street and by a passage to the beach.

The grey beach with the blue sea breaking on it was almost deserted; the few palms that grow

here shook and shivered in the wind, and on the seats that front the sea no one was to be seen with the exception of a couple of nursemaids and a young man with a shawl over his shoulders and who looked far gone in consumption.

Carslake turned to the left, following the path by the sea wall past the little Kursaal; the forlorn beach was like an omen of evil to him. A feeling came to him that he would not find Julia again; that she had left Bordighera, and perhaps yielding to the impulse of a moment, gone back to Monte Carlo.

Just beyond the Kursaal the rocks begin that separate the fishermen's beach from the town beach; beyond these rocks lies the blue bay, across which the white houses of Ospedeletti can be seen and the promontory which hides San Remo.

Carslake, standing on the highest point of these rocks, looked about him.

Then he saw Julia—she was sitting on a rock close to the sea edge by the little bathing-place —but she was not alone.

CHAPTER XXII

A MEETING BY THE SEA

JULIA awoke at four o'clock in the morning. "The Romance of a Spahi" was lying on the floor, just where she had cast it before putting out the light. She reached for it, and switching on the light again, began to glance it over. It seemed to her dull and rather meaningless and the connection between Jack and the Spahi and Marie Miton and Fatou Gaye a figment of her disordered mind of the night before. It seemed to her that Loti was a flaring example of that odious product of latter-day literature—the sexualist, and that just as a certain English author has debased the desert and commonplaced it in his books by the introduction of frocks and frills, so Loti has, true to his spoiling instinct, made it the background for a prostitute.

She was in the humour for savage criticism, and her unvoiced but scathing criticism of Loti was sufficient in itself to pay off the score for

his criticism of Englishwomen in his book about Egypt; though, indeed, his own unconscious revelation of himself requires little scathing addition.* She would have supplemented Miss Adams' dictum on the want of sense of humour by the addition that the want of it ruins books as well as states had she known of that lady's existence and her speech. Supremely unconscious of both and of Carslake's doings, and of the fact that Carslake was in Ventimiglia dreaming of her at that present moment, Julia cast her book again to the floor, switched out the light and tried to go to sleep again.

Impossible! Jack was dominating her thoughts. She could not get away from him; and the strange or perhaps the natural thing was that this domination was not in the least like the domination one would have suspected.

It was the shell of the irresponsible Jack, not the soul of him, that tormented her. She was thinking neither of his goodness nor his bad-

* "We thought we had finished with the Cooks and Cookesses, but alas! our horses, faster than their donkeys, overtook them. Almost touching me is a dear little white donkey who looks at me pensively and in such a way that we at once understand one another. A mutual sympathy unites us."—"Egypt," by Pierre Loti, page 145.

ness; she was, in fact, not thinking seriously of him at all; yet his image was there in the room with her, walking about in its shirt-sleeves with a hair-brush in each hand. Now it was holding up a shirt, saying: "Julia, there's not a blessed button on this shirt." Now it was lighting a cigarette or hunting for its tobacco-pouch.

Heavens! What a number of infinitesimal things make up married life, and how these infinitesimal things bind people together!

They pulled at Julia from every point; even when at eight o'clock the servant brought in rolls and coffee and placed them on the table by the bed, the fact that Jack took three lumps of sugar in his coffee rose from the tray like an imp to confront her.

When she was dressed she came downstairs and occupied herself in writing a long letter to her publisher, proposing the terms for a new book.

She sealed this, and after a conversation with the manageress of the hotel started out to post her letter, saying that she proposed to spend some time by the seashore, but would be back for *déjeuner* at half-past twelve.

When she had posted the letter she walked through the town, made some small purchases and then went on to the beach. She pursued her way along the beach till she reached the rocks, and climbed over them till she found a comfortable seat sheltered from the wind. She had brought a book with her and she tried to read, but reading was hopeless.

The sound of the sea breaking on the rocks was enough to distract her attention. It was a sound full of loneliness. Loneliness was pursuing her like a hound, or rather, like a pack of hounds. Mrs. Freke, the Duchess of Kent, nearly everyone she knew—all were members of the pack; all were yelping to the same refrain: "We pursue you to torment you—but we don't want you—yah!"

The world seemed extraordinarily hideous; not a friend anywhere. Society, epitomised in the Duchess of Kent and explained in the bow and smile of Mrs. Freke, appeared to her as a monstrous form compounded of egotism, chill and greed. It seemed to her, looking back on the Parisian days, that there was far more warmth and humanity amidst the Bohemians.

Yet, strange to say, the Bohemians were more obnoxious to her now than the Society folk.

Her condemnation of the world included everyone. Yes, the whole world was vile and cold and hard and selfish.

She was gazing at the blue, breaking sea as she reached this ultimate conclusion, and then, tired of gazing at the sea, she turned and saw Jack.

He was coming across the rocks towards her. Now the rocks just here are huge and ragged, and to cross them you must leave your dignity behind you and emulate the crab.

Jack looked not unlike a climbing beetle, but Julia's face did not change, and the only evidence of her emotion was a slight heightening in colour; for a moment she half rose, as if to make her escape, then she sat down again and waited whilst the crawling one drew nearer.

"Look here," said Jack, when he got within reach of her: "what's the good of all this? I've been hunting for you everywhere. It's absolutely absurd. How long have you been here?"

He was talking as if their parting had only

been half an hour ago, and as if their quarrel had been a tiff over some trifle. When he had sighted her first he had got ready the set speech he had prepared in the train; but the thing wouldn't go off. It had clean gone from his mind, in fact. The climbing over the rocks had completed the business.

"How long have I been where?" said Julia.

"Here, in this beastly place. You wouldn't even listen to an explanation."

"There was nothing to explain. You spoke to me in a way no man would ever speak to a person he cared for—he even respected. It wants no explanation."

"I speak to you! I never said anything. You flew out at me like a tiger."

"Thanks."

"I only asked you where you'd been."

"Oh, you only asked where I'd been. Well, I'll tell you now where I was—I was with Mr. Carslake."

"Thanks," said Jack, and he grew white.

Julia had never seen him grow white before; he looked suddenly blanched and old, and she felt frightened.

"Thanks. I don't want to hear any more." He turned to go.

"Perhaps," said Julia, "if you don't want to hear any more for your own sake, you may for mine. I was with Mr. Carslake, and we spent the night on the golf links of Monte Carlo in the club-house. We had to, simply because we could not find our way down on account of the fog."

He had turned again.

"The club-house?"

"Yes. It's only half-built and we had to shelter there. We lit a fire and sat there shivering and then I got some old sacks and made a bed."

"But why didn't you *tell* me?"

"*Tell* you. I wasn't in the humour for telling anyone anything, and you were a nice person to tell things to, coming home like that at six in the morning, after having spent a night with those people."

"Well, if you'd told me you'd have saved all this. *Damn* Carslake and the golf links. He's as near as possible done for me. There I was without money, without a blessed cent—"

"Without money! Why, you kept half the bank-notes."

"Yes, and I lost them."

"Lost them!" Julia flushed. She was beginning to forgive Jack, but this blow hit her hard. Her precious money that she had laboured for, the money that meant so much and the loss of which would condemn them to pinching and scraping and all the noxious shifts of poverty—lost!

"Oh, you *idiot!*" said she. "You *idiot!* Lost! Look at the position you have put us in; think of going back to Paris with less than half the money we started with; think of it, and think of me working and slaving, and you—ugh! *How* did you lose it?"

"I lost it at the tables," said Jack. He was delighted with the abuse—first, because it showed Julia had returned to a healthy and abusive state of mind; secondly, because she had taken up married life again and admitted the fact unconsciously in her words; thirdly, because he felt he deserved it, and, fourthly, because he was hiding from her what she did not know—to wit, his recoupment of his losses.

"You lost it at the tables!" said Julia. "Just for viciousness, because I left you, I suppose you went off and flung the money away—the precious money I worked so hard for and which was mine."

"I lost it before you went away," said Jack, taking his seat on the rock by her.

"When?"

"Oh, the day before. It nearly drove me mad! I began to play for a few shillings, then I got sucked in. I lost and lost. Then I left the rooms and came up to La Turbie; you were out, so I dressed and went back to the rooms. When play closed for the night I was still badly on the losing side. I couldn't come back to La Turbie; I wanted to talk to people, so I went to Bachellry's and played cards. When we stopped it was too late for me to go back, so I slept on his sofa. Then you met me coming back. When I left you the pocket-book I left you all the money I had except a few sovereigns, not enough to pay our bill at La Turbie."

Julia groaned.

"So we have to pay that still," said she, "and the bill here and the railway fare back—" She

stopped and gazed gloomily before her. She had sunk all thoughts of dividing from Jack and "making her own life." The absence from him had woven one fact into the texture of her mind, and that was the fact that he and she were one and indivisible for better or worse; that they had grown together too closely to be divided; that though she might rail at him and carp at him, and that though he might be a trouble and a blight on her social life, he was a necessary part of her. She recognised this without knowing in the least that in her mind during the last twelve hours a new birth had taken place. The growth of that most illogical, yet perfect thing—affection. The thing that actually thrives on imperfection, and makes a woman care all the more for a man when he becomes bald-headed.

It was the absolute separation from Jack, and the feeling that she was never to live with him again, that provided the soil for this plant to grow in. Mrs. Freke, the Duchess of Kent, Miss Hetherington, and Society generally had watered and gardened it. Loneliness had done the rest. She was not the character to go away and leave for ever the man she had loved, no

matter what he might do, simply because she was the character that makes a good mother and was at heart a good woman.

She had taken Jack back without any formality of speech, and pretty much as a mother takes back a truant child.

She now proceeded to lay him across her knee —metaphorically speaking—and—comb him.

"Well, it will be you that will suffer. We shall go back third-class; you'll enjoy that. And I'll have no new clothes this spring; but that's a detail, and you'll come to England; painting or no painting, you'll have to put up with life in a little cottage somewhere. I will not live in Paris any longer. I am going to take affairs in hand myself now; you have muddled them quite enough. What's that you're taking from your pocket—a cigar done up in silver paper? What did that cost?"

"Three francs," said Jack, stripping the paper from the cigar.

"What I like about you," said Julia, with chilly calm, yet feeling as though she wanted to scream out her feelings and laugh and cry and beat Jack all at the same time, "is your care

and thought for me. You never think of yourself. If you put that thing in your mouth I will never speak to you again. Three francs and I wanting a new blouse. And I wouldn't even get a cup of chocolate this morning at Berger's just to save the money."

Jack put the cigar back into his pocket.

"What I like about you," said he, "is the way you never listen to reason—or, rather, you never ask for a reason. Do you think I'd smoke three-franc cigars if I wasn't able to afford one now and then?"

"I do," said Julia. "And what do you mean? You told me a moment ago that you had lost all that money. You know our position, or ought to, and now you talk about being able to afford extravagances like that."

"Yes, but you didn't let me finish."

Julia glanced at him and her colour heightened; he wore such a self-satisfied look that she could not help feeling there was something behind all this.

"Well, finish then."

"I will. I went to the tables last night; I had scarcely any money and I lost every cent.

I came out and had not enough to buy a cigarette. Hadn't a cigarette even. Mind you, I had not one single cent in the whole world."

"Yes, go on."

"I had just put my empty cigarette-case back in my pocket when I saw something shining on the ground at my feet. It was a plaque—a hundred-franc piece. I picked it up and went back to the rooms. It was my only chance, and I felt luck was with me at last. I put the plaque on number three."

"Yes?"

"It won."

"And what did you win?"

"Well, you see, I put five louis down and I won thirty-five times my stake—that is to say, I won a hundred and seventy-five louis."

"Oh, thank goodness!" cried Julia. "What luck!"

She had forgotten their differences; the overwhelming sense of relief made her forget everything for the moment; the dreary prospect of scraping and saving and the vision of a third-class return to Paris vanished. A hundred and seventy-five louis was not much, but it meant all

the difference to them between comparative ease and hard times.

"Wait a moment," said Jack. "I was counting my notes when the ball spun again, and next moment the croupier handed me another hundred and seventy-five louis. You see, I had forgotten to take up my stake and three had won again."

Julia stared at him in astonishment.

"So you made over three hundred louis!"

"Three hundred and fifty louis I made."

"Jack," said she, "there is more than luck in that. It was Providence. Oh, to think of it! Why, we're richer than we started—nearly."

"I haven't done yet," said Jack. "When I made that money I had not really begun to play. The thing seized me all at once. I felt I was going with the stream, and that I couldn't lose. I went mad, I believe, for in my calm senses I never would have dared to stake as I did. I won and won; sometimes I lost, but the luck always came back. I didn't know I had it in me to do what I did, and I believe I never would have done it if I hadn't been in a temper with

you and reckless. Besides, I seemed to know that luck had done all she could against me and was now on my side."

"What did you win?" cried Julia. "Don't keep me in suspense like this."

"I won nearly four thousand pounds."

"Four—thousand—pounds!"

"Four thousand pounds."

He took the notes from his pocket and showed them to her, and at the sight of the ninety thousand-franc notes Julia gasped and caught her hand to her heart. Then she took them and felt them, and laughed over them like a child. As far as they went they represented everything worth having—peace, and time to write in, clothes, escape from petty worries.

"They're yours," said Jack.

"Mine!"

"Of course. Didn't I win them with your money?"

She turned to him and kissed him. There were tears on her cheeks. Then, holding his coat open, she put the notes back in his breast-pocket.

"They belong to us both. Oh, Jack, I've been

a fool—and so have you! But I was the worst, for I went off and left you. When I met you yesterday morning I told a lie, too. At least, I pretended I'd been sitting up waiting for you. You see, it was so hard to explain all that when I was in a temper. I could have told you easily enough, and laughed over it as a joke, if I hadn't been angry with you and with that fog for playing me such a trick."

"Never mind, Julie," said he; "it's over now and there's no use in crying over spilt milk. Besides, only for that row I would never have made that pile. Isn't it fine? I don't want to think of anything else; a man doesn't have such a piece of luck once in a thousand years. I want to taste it as much as I can before the impression gets faint. Do you know, I broke the bank."

"Broke the bank?"

"Yes; at least, they had to send for more money to play with. Bachellry says that each table is allowed eighty thousand francs to start with; the table must have been losing when I struck in; anyhow, they had to send out and get more money towards the end."

"Bachellry?" said Julia. "Was he with you?"

At this question the remembrance of Fatou Gaye shot up in his mind and he began to laugh. He told her of the incident of the night before, and Julia, who on the subject of Mademoiselle Miton had no sense of humour at all, listened with dilated eyes.

"Beast!" she said. "I always knew her for exactly what she was from the moment she stepped on my foot getting into the train. Jack, you may believe me or not, but I can sympathise with a bad woman when her badness is impulsive. I could forgive a woman for falling in love with you and trying to take you from me, though I'd very likely give her something as well. But I cannot forgive a woman like that—she isn't a woman; she's an ape, with the soul of an ape and its tricks. She was made to act in a French comedy and rob a decent man of his money, and if she had stopped snoring and woken up, she'd have robbed you. I know her. Well, thank goodness we are safe out of Monte Carlo. I would not go back there for worlds."

"That reminds me," said Jack, bursting

out laughing. "You couldn't if you wanted to."

"And why not, pray?"

"Well, it's this way. Carslake has the police after him. Do you know what he is? He's a secret service man, and he's been making plans of all the forts on the French side. I never got such a surprise as when I found out."

"I know," said Julia; "he told me."

"Well," said Jack, "when you went out yesterday morning with him, the landlady saw you, and she told the police. And do you know what the police thought? They thought you and he had run off together."

Julia's face flushed all over.

"They think it still," went on Jack; "and upon my word, for a moment I thought it too. Anyhow, there's the fact. We'll have to go home by the Genoa route, for if they saw you passing through Monte Carlo they'd bottle you."

"Fools," said Julia. She was silent for a moment; then she turned to him.

"Jack, how did you know I was here?"

"How did I know? I forgot, that's the funniest part of the thing. I got a letter."

"A letter?"

"Yes, an anonymous letter. Just a few lines saying you were here and giving your hotel."

"Have you got the letter?"

"I believe so."

He hunted in his pockets, found it, and gave it to her.

She read it carefully and looked at the postmark.

"Mr. Carslake wrote this."

"Carslake?"

"Yes, I know his handwriting. He lent me a book the other day, and his name was in it written by himself. Besides, he was the only person who knew I was here."

"How on earth did he know that?"

"I told him—at least, he advised me to come here."

"Like his cheek."

"It wasn't cheek at all. He is our very best friend. He is the very best man in the world. I'll tell you a secret—I think he cared for me."

"Damn him!" said Jack. "Did he tell you that?"

Julia hesitated a moment.

"He did. Don't fly into a temper. Another man would have tried to make mischief between us; he didn't. He took your part; he saw the state I was in. He told me to come to the hotel here; and then, though he must have done it at great risk to himself, he sent you that letter telling you where I was."

"He shouldn't have told you that. No man should say such a thing to a married woman."

"My dear Jack, he's not a man like other men; he's just himself, and if you had heard him telling me that you would not have been in the least offended. He talked to me like a grandfather."

"Oh, that sort of thing—"

"Not a bit. He really does care for me. When a man older than a woman talks to her like a grandfather, he generally means mischief. Carslake is absolutely different, and he is about the only man in the world I would trust—except you."

Julia spoke quite unconscious of the fact of Carslake's sleepless night, of the original man's revolt, and of the journey of Carslake to Bordighera. As a matter of fact, she did not know Carslake in the least, or, at least, she knew him as little as he knew himself.

"Well," said Jack, relenting, "he seems to have acted straight, anyhow. I must say I always liked him; he was a fellow who could look you in the eye and he was a gentleman all right. Where did he go when you left him?"

"He went straight up towards the golf course, and I do hope to goodness he's escaped."

"He's pretty sure to have done that," said Jack. "I say, Julia, did we ever think when we started from Paris we were going to have such a lively time, running away from each other, and breaking the bank, and mixing up with spies, and you being suspected by the police? That's the cream of the joke."

"I don't want any more cream like it," said Julia. "I want nothing now but a little peace and quiet. Why, there he is!"

"Who?"

"Mr. Carslake."

Jack turned and saw Carslake just as we left him, standing on the edge of the rocks with his eyes fixed on Julia.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE INEVITABLE

He had been standing like this for half a minute, and he had just broken from the spell and was preparing to make his retreat when he saw that he was recognised.

He raised his hat and came towards them. He could tell at the first glance that the pair were reconciled; he saw before him his own work, and knew that it was good, and that it had destroyed the chief desire of his heart; yet his face showed nothing at all of the tumult in his mind.

He had to negotiate the rocks just as Jack had done.

Julia rose to meet him.

"So you've got here all safe," said she.

"Yes," said Carslake. "I made my escape."

He shook hands with them, and they sat down Jack produced his cigarette-case, now filled, and Carslake took a cigarette and lit it.

"Tell us all about it," said Julia. "Did you go back to Monte Carlo when I left you?"

"No. I kept to the hills, but I sent a messenger back to Monte Carlo to arrange some matters for me, and to post a letter; then I walked to Mentone and got to the railway station there half an hour or so before the train for Ventimiglia was due to start. And then who do you think I found waiting for me?"

"Who?"

"The Chief of the Mentone Police."

"By Jove!" said Jack. "Did he know you?"

"Evidently; and he was just going to seize me when I escaped. It seems horribly like a criminal talking about being chased by the police; but you know my business, and that it's political. Anyhow, chased by the police I was, down an alley and into a street full of shops."

He told the story of the tea-shop and his return to the station, and his renewed flight in the motor-car, Julia and her companion listening open-mouthed to the recital.

Jack was the first to break silence.

"That was a ripping girl," said he; "if she hadn't taken the whole thing in at a glance and

acted on it at once you'd have been bottled as sure as we are sitting here. I'd give anything to see that Chief of Police's face this morning. He knows you haven't gone by train, and he has had all the roads out of Mentone watched. I expect he's hunting still."

Julia looked at her watch.

"It's after half-past twelve," said she; "won't you come and have luncheon with us, we can go somewhere in the town?—the hotel is too far and they'll have started luncheon there already."

They rose up and reached the path leading by the beach and by it reached the town, where they had luncheon at the Café Central near the railway station.

Carslake, who had spoken little during their walk through the town, seemed depressed, but during the meal his spirits rose. He was a man who always accepted the inevitable without complaint; though he had fought for liberty to the last, had he been seized he would have taken his imprisonment without a grumble, and though half an hour ago, had he found Julia alone he would have taken a course profoundly

altering his and her life, now that he found that course impossible, he did not grumble. He was a fatalist who did not whine—the only excusable form of that article.

Jack had ordered champagne to celebrate the occasion, and the conversation turned to the tables, and Julia told the story of the grand coup over again.

Carslake listened appreciatively.

"It's only another instance," said he. "Nothing at all is done in this world without daring. If you had split that plaque up into twenty-franc pieces and played only on the colour or some other even chance you would probably have made twenty pounds or so and lost it again."

"And if you had given up all hope in that tea-shop," said Julia, "you would now be in prison instead of sitting here at luncheon with us."

"It's true," said Carslake, smiling and glancing at Jack. "We are both gamblers, and it seems we have won."

He spoke ironically, for he knew he had lost in the game which he had played against Jack,

and in which he had loaded the dice against himself.

The struggle had been in reality not between him and the husband of Julia, but between his two natures.

And the better had won, even though at the last it had been almost defeated.

They said good-bye outside the café, Carslake returning to Ventimiglia and Julia and her husband making their way to the hotel.

CHAPTER XXIV

ENVOI

A WEEK later, having had enough of the Riviera and the distant view of La Turbie above the white dream of Monte Carlo, they determined to return, not to Paris, but to England.

"We have nearly four thousand pounds," said Julia, "and that, at five per cent. will bring us in two hundred a year; and two hundred a year is affluence in a cottage. Then there is what we can make by painting and writing books."

"Where do you propose to take your cottage?" asked Jack.

"Somewhere not far from London," replied Julia; "somewhere where one can think and not go to sleep. It's a frightful mistake to go too far from London, or Paris, for the matter of that; a city is like a lamp radiating thought rays. I don't want to be *in* the lamp, it's too full of moths with burnt-up wings, and the rays

are too strong, they give me a headache; but I don't want to be too far from it.

"The Midlands! Heavens, no! Whoever wrote a book or painted a picture in the Midlands! Devonshire is too junkety; besides, I believe Dartmoor is being enclosed by the Government, the conduct of literary people has been so queer there; besides, it's worn bald—Sussex, perhaps, or Kent."

"So be it," said Jack.

Two days later they went into San Remo and took their tickets at Cook's for Paris *viâ* Genoa and Turin.

At the station on the morning of starting Jack bought a copy of the *New York Herald* (Paris Edition). In the train he handed it to Julia, pointing to a passage which she read. It ran:

"An exciting incident is reported from Mentone, where the season has been a very full one and marked by the large number of American visitors who are staying at the hotels or have taken villas for the spring months. Amongst these are John J. Adams, of the Fourth Avenue National Bank, his wife and niece. At a lunch-

eon-party given yesterday by Mr. Adams in celebration of his niece's birthday the police made a dramatic entry with the dessert.

"It appears that a gentleman of the name of Carslake, who had made the acquaintance of the Adams family, was the object of this unexpected attention on the part of the authorities. He had come over for luncheon from Ventimiglia on the Italian side, and his car, which he had taken the precaution to leave outside the hotel and which the police had neglected to guard, was the means of one of the most dramatic escapes in the history of the Riviera.

"Carslake, it seems, had to do with the Italian Secret Service and he was wanted by the French police for map-making and other misdemeanours. It appears that they all but had him a week ago, but he eluded them and made his escape across the frontier. Instead of staying in safety he had the hardihood to accept the invitation of the unsuspecting Adamses.

"The result was that our gentleman, suddenly confronted with the law, made a dash for liberty, upsetting the law in his course. Reached his car, a powerful Darracq, managed to start

her single-handed, and with the law in full pursuit, but on foot, headed for Monte Carlo.

"A mile from Monte Carlo he left the car to look after itself, and by some miraculous means reached Monaco.

"J. P. Herring (another American), had anchored his yacht that morning in the quiet harbour of the little Principality. Her motor-launch was at the harbour steps with one man in charge and to him appeared a cool stranger, none other than Carslake.

"Now Carslake must have been a man possessing that wide range of everyday knowledge which is a fortune sometimes in a tight place. He knew the Herring yacht, and, guessing the launch to belong to her, ordered the sailor to take him on board, making out that he was a friend of Herring's.

"The man replied that Mr. Herring was on shore. Whereupon Carslake said he knew that fact, as he had just left Mr. Herring's company, and that the latter had asked him to repair on board the yacht and there wait for him.

"The unfortunate sailor complied with Carslake's wishes, with the result that half-way

across the harbour, at the muzzle of a revolver held inconspicuously but persuasively by the Secret Service man, he had to shift his helm and make for the open sea.

"The launch crossed the blue bay towards the Italian coast and landed its passenger on the shore beyond the point that shelters San Remo.

"Here Carslake disappeared. Nor has he been heard of since, though the Italian authorities are said to be searching diligently for him. A search which, if we know anything about the ways of governments, is being conducted with one eye shut."

"He went to luncheon with that girl?" cried Julia.

"I thought he seemed a bit struck with her," said Jack. "What a beggar the chap is for coolness! He deserves success."

Julia said nothing for awhile, then Jack found himself suddenly embraced—they had the compartment to themselves—and found to his equal astonishment that Julia was in tears.

"Why," he cried, "what's the matter, Julia, darling—what are you crying for?"

"I'm not crying. I don't know." Julia wiped her cheek on his shoulder. "It's all so strange," said she, "the whole thing, and—there—it's over."

THE END

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